

Germany

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GERMANY

In 1946, Winston Churchill prophetically coined the term "Iron Curtain" to describe the invisible barrier between the ideologies of East and West. Today, that curtain of iron is a reality. It comprises 1,393 kilometres of manned fortifications and it divides Germany's 78 million people into two separate sovereign states.

Here, as nowhere else on earth, the polarized worlds of capitalism and communism are dramatically and tellingly juxtaposed. East and west, the German people are bonded together by language, history and cultural traditions. Via everyday television, they have an open window on each other's society. Yet they remain locked into fundamentally opposite and incompatible socio-economic and political systems.

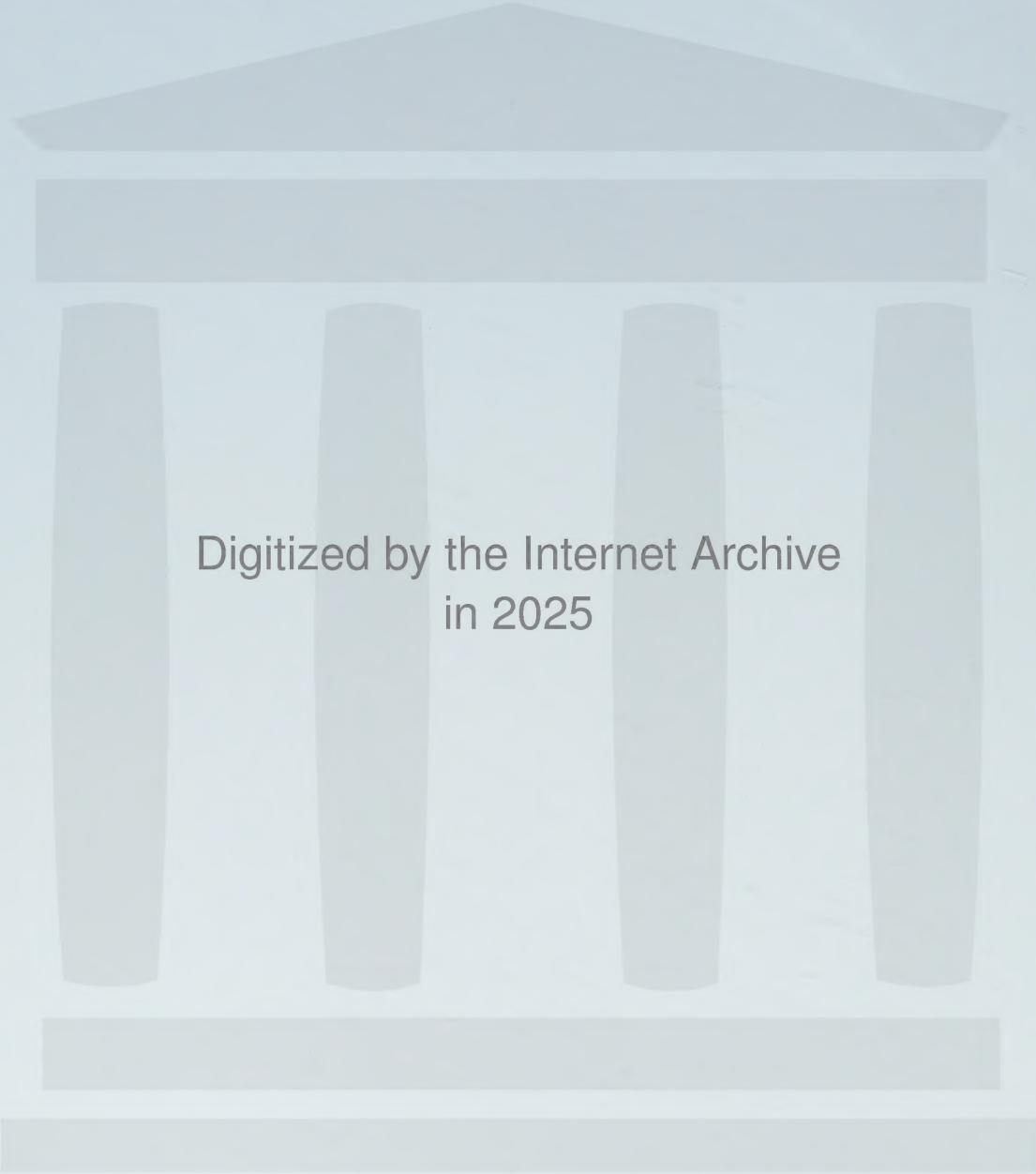
What is it like to belong to such a sundered nation? How do the lifestyles and achievements of the two Germanys compare? Can the long-cherished dream of German reunification ever be realized?

This book presents an in-depth study of German life on either side of the east-west frontier, prepared by an expert team of writers and photographers, and supported by a wealth of maps, graphs and charts designed to clarify every important aspect of the shaping of modern Germany. It explains:

- How, after the devastation of World War II, West Germany worked an "economic miracle" to become the world's fourth largest industrial power.
- How East Germany, with a relatively small population of 17 million, has become the strongest sporting nation, per capita, in the world.
- How West Germany's post-war generation has strongly challenged traditional values, while East German youth has been regimented, and its energy harnessed to the interests of the state.
- How West Germany's population is steadily declining, while East Germany performs a remarkable double-act—maintaining a huge female work force and successfully encouraging a relatively high birth rate.
- How Germans, east and west, share a passion for food and drink (per head, they are the world's most prodigious consumers of beer) and, conflictly, a strong desire for physical fitness (millions attend health spas every year).
- Why the German people have known only 74 years (1871 to 1945) as a united nation with a single capital; and why they seem doomed, forever, to remain a divided nation.







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GERMANY





GERMANY

By the Editors of Time-Life Books

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Valuable help was given in the preparation of this volume by Hans-Heinrich Wellmann (Hamburg) and Elizabeth Kraemer-Singh (Bonn).

CONSULTANTS: Dr. Volker Berghahn is Professor of Modern History at the University of Warwick, Coventry. He has written several books and articles on 20th-century German history.

Patricia Clough is a former correspondent in Bonn for Reuters and, more recently, for the *London Times*.

Special Contributors: The chapter texts were written by: Windsor Chorlton, Patricia Clough, Frederic V. Grunfeld, Alan Lothian, Mark Roseman and Margaret Wightman.
Other Contributors: Dr. Roger Morgan and Louise Earwaker.

Cover: A small 19th-century Catholic chapel nestles amid fir trees in Upper Bavaria.

Pages 1 and 2: The national emblems of the two Germanys are shown on page 1. The emblem of the Federal Republic has a black eagle with 10 feathers, a stylized version of the 12-feathered eagle adopted by the Holy Roman Empire of Germany and later by the Prussian-forged German empire of 1871 to 1918. The emblem of the Democratic Republic features a hammer and a pair of dividers, representing industry, and a wreath of ears of wheat, symbolizing agriculture. The two German flags (*page 2*) are fundamentally the same: a horizontal tricolour of black over red over yellow. The GDR, however, has its emblem at the centre of the national colours.

Front and back endpapers: A topographic map showing the major rivers, mountain ranges and other natural features of Germany appears on the front endpaper; the back endpaper shows the 11 states of West Germany and the 15 counties of East Germany, with principal towns and rivers.

This volume is one in a series of books describing countries of the world—their natural resources, peoples, histories, economies and governments.

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 Fourth European English language printing 1989

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ISBN 0 7054 0844 2

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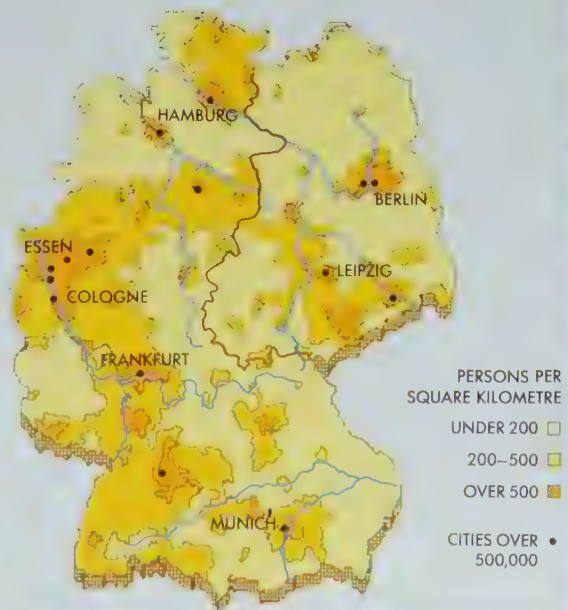
Sprawling on each side of the River Elbe, the city-state of Hamburg, with 1.6 million people, is the FRG's busiest port and second largest metropolis.



PATTERNS OF URBANIZATION

The distribution of Germany's population has changed dramatically since World War II. Conurbations have developed with industrial expansion, especially in the west and south-west. Above all, there has been a huge population shift from the east. Between 1945 and the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961—more than 14 million refugees and expellees fled westward. As a result, the new Federal Republic—after the Netherlands and Belgium—is the third most densely populated state in Europe.

Today, West Germany has 61.5 million inhabitants, compared with 20 million a century ago, and an average of 248 persons per square kilometre. East Germany has 16.8 million and only 155 to the square kilometre. Although both Germanys have been highly urbanized since the war, the GDR has medium-sized towns. Whereas the Federal Republic has 68 towns with over 100,000 inhabitants, the GDR has only nine, mostly in the industrial south.





In the May Day parade, members of the Free German Youth stride through East Berlin beneath a blaze of flags bearing portraits of Communist heroes.



MOBILIZING THE COUNTRY'S YOUTH

There are approximately three million young people aged 14 to 25 in East Germany. More than three quarters of them belong to the Free German Youth (FDJ), a movement which developed out of anti-fascist youth committees formed immediately after World War II. Founded in 1946 by future Head of State Erich Honecker, the FDJ now claims to have helped in raising and shaping almost half of the GDR's total population. It represents its 2.3 million members in all sectors of public life where their interests are

at stake: in schools, colleges, collectives and factories. It also has 40 representatives in the 500-deputy People's Chamber, the GDR parliament.

Through the FDJ, the energies and interests of East German youth are effectively harnessed. Members are organized into more than 6,500 youth clubs. They take part in German-Soviet festivals and in *Spartakiaden*, nationwide sports contests held biennially. They attend political rallies, and political study courses to assimilate Marxism-Leninism, and

in order to become "convinced, class-conscious socialists".

As good socialists, FDJ members are encouraged to contribute directly to the economy of the state by joining voluntary youth brigades formed to supplement the work force where urgently needed. In return for modest wages, such brigades help with a variety of projects—bringing in harvests, building dams, draining swamps, or working on a sector of the great Soviet pipeline being laid to carry natural gas from Siberia to both Eastern and Western Europe.



DEEP-ROOTED TRADITIONS OF FAITH

In 1517, the north German monk Martin Luther launched a challenge to papal authority that culminated in the Reformation and the division of Germany into two warring camps, Catholic and Protestant. Today, in West Germany, the two churches are divided almost equally: about 26.7 million Catholics largely in the Rhineland and Bavaria; and some 26.5 million Protestants, mainly in the north and east. However, only one third of the Catholics and less than 10 per cent of the Protestants are regular churchgoers. And in East Germany, where Protestants (some

7.7 million) far outnumber Catholics (about 1.2 million), churchgoing has declined even more dramatically. Indeed, only about 5 per cent of the GDR Protestants are churchgoers.

In the early 1930s, some 530,000 Jews made up Germany's most vital religious minority. Now, following the Nazi holocaust, there are only 28,000 Jews in West Germany, and about 1,500 in the GDR, half in East Berlin. Their numbers continue to decline, while, in West Germany, a large religious minority increases: some 1.5 million Muslims, mainly Turkish "guest workers" and families.

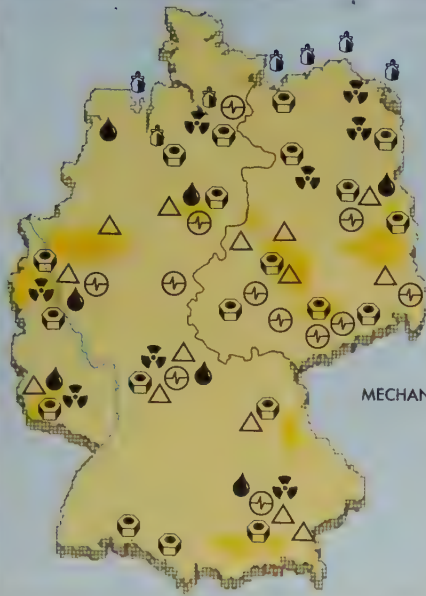
In the town of Chieming, in the predominantly Catholic state of Bavaria, girls in traditional dress are going to church for their first communion.





In a steel-making shop in East Germany, white-hot steel is poured into a mould. The GDR ranks 10th among the steel-producing countries of Europe.

PILLARS OF INDUSTRIAL MIGHT

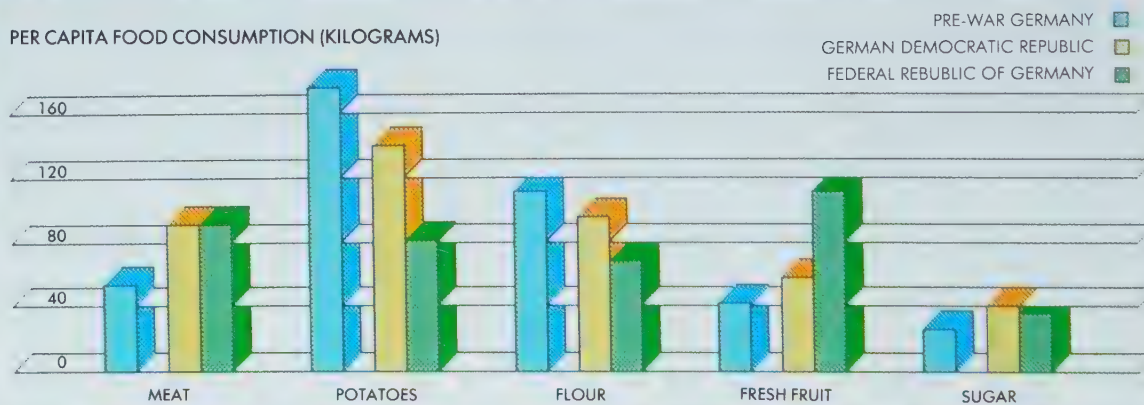


- SHIPBUILDING 
- MECHANICAL ENGINEERING 
- ELECTRONICS 
- CHEMICALS 
- OIL REFINING 
- NUCLEAR POWER 
- MINING 

German industry—both east and west—made a spectacular recovery from the devastation of World War II. Within two decades, the Federal Republic was the third economic power in the world; within 25 years, the GDR was the 10th strongest industrial nation. Both achieved prominence in chemical production and mechanical and electrical engineering. Both prospered with relatively few raw materials. Since the 1970s, after rises in world oil prices, the two Germanys have built nuclear power stations and made greater use of their natural resources. West Germany has major hard coal reserves in the Ruhr and Saarland, and large deposits of lignite near the Harz mountains. The GDR has two minerals in abundance: lignite and potash. The former now accounts for 80 per cent of the country's energy.



PER CAPITA FOOD CONSUMPTION (KILOGRAMS)



A CONSUMING LOVE OF FOOD AND DRINK

The German people—as first noted by the Roman historian, Tacitus—have always been renowned for prodigious appetites; and the reputation, as statistics show, is still merited. In recent years, however, there has been a swing away from such starchy staples as potatoes and flour, and a demand for fresh fruit and meat. The trend—a measure of German prosperity and

greater diet-consciousness—has been most pronounced in West Germany. There, for example, the annual consumption of potatoes has fallen since pre-war days from 176 kilograms per capita to around 80 kilograms. In the GDR, the pre-war figure has fallen to 141 kilograms, but East Germany remains third—behind the Soviet Union and Poland—among the potato-

growing nations of Europe. The low consumption of fresh fruit in the GDR is a reflection of supply rather than demand. When it comes to drink, Germans, east and west, retain their traditional place as the greatest beer-drinkers. They are also drinking more wine, especially in the Federal Republic, where consumption increased by almost half in the 1970s.

Fields of barley (*foreground*) and hops range over the rolling plains of lower Bavaria. West Germany is by far the biggest grower of hops in the world.



1





A NATION DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF

The world's longest fortification (excluding the unmanned Great Wall of China) is a serpentine monstrosity that runs 1,393 kilometres through the heart of Germany, from the Bay of Lübeck in the north to the German-Czechoslovak frontier south-east of Hof in Bavaria. Composed of barbed wire, steel-mesh fencing, minefields, anti-tank ditches, shrapnel-scattering boobytraps, bunkers, pillboxes and watchtowers, this almost impenetrable barrier has sliced through centuries-old communities and terminated 32 railway lines, three *Autobahnen* (motorways), 31 main highways, 80 primary roads, about 60 secondary roads and thousands of country lanes and tracks. It has also split asunder the great German nation, ensuring that its 78 million people remain divided between two distinctly separate sovereign states: the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in the west and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in the east.

Indirectly, the marking out of this frontier began in the early summer of 1945, after the war in Europe ended with Germany's unconditional surrender and its division into four zones of occupation (*map, page 18*), separately controlled by the victorious powers: Britain, France, the Soviet Union and the United States. But it was not a national frontier then, merely the boundary between the Soviet zone and the zones of the British and Americans. The line of this boundary roughly con-

formed to a zonal scheme fashioned as early as January 1944. At that time—five months before the Normandy invasion—the Western Allies had no reason to suppose that they would outpace the Soviets in advancing across Germany. And so they readily agreed to plans for a Soviet zone that constituted about 40 per cent of Germany.

In any event, it was not their intention that Germany should be divided on a permanent basis. In 1945, the overriding aim of the Allied powers was to ensure that Germany would never again be capable of waging war. The administration of the country was to be decentralized; all concentrations of economic power in industry were to be demolished. At the same time, it remained the intention to treat Germany as a single unit in terms of social, economic and political planning. The zones of occupation were created strictly for administrative purposes. Officially, movement between the four zones was restricted. But this restriction was not at first rigidly enforced. In 1945, the western border of the Soviet zone was marked only by sporadic signposts and lightly patrolled on either side by local police and troops of the occupying powers. In the early post-war years, literally millions of Germans were able to cross that border illegally—and the majority chose to move permanently west, away from Soviet control.

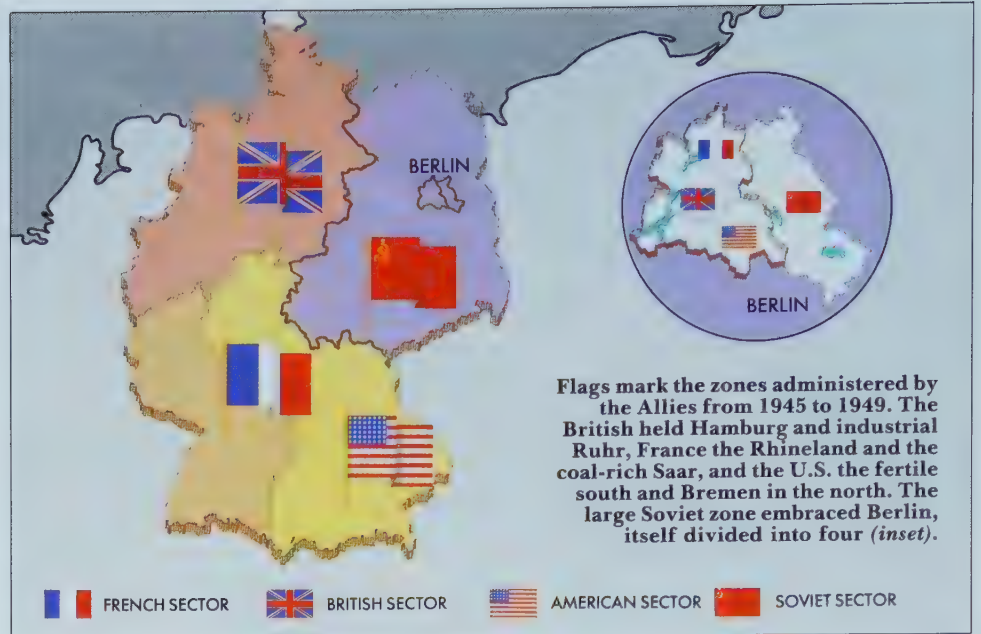
During those years, relations between the Soviets and their Western

Mirrored in East Berlin's Palast der Republik (*above, left*), the Dom church is a monument to 19th-century architectural extravagance. In West Germany, a Frankfurt mansion of the same era (*above, right*), silhouetted against a high-rise bank, is another reminder of changing styles.

allies steadily deteriorated. In war, they had been bound together by the need to fight for survival against a common enemy; in peacetime, they were torn apart by fundamental ideological differences, divergent national interests, and conflicting economic policies. This growing divide—part of an east-west schism that assumed global dimensions and developed into the so-called “cold war”—was formally recognized in September 1949, when the three Western zones became the Federal Republic and, one month later, the Soviet zone was transformed into the GDR. Today they are more commonly known as West Germany and East Germany, respectively.

The foundation of two separate German states instantly increased the flow of citizens from east to west. In May 1952, the East German government became so alarmed at the decline in its population that it announced plans for creating a 10-metre-wide ploughed strip along the entire border with West Germany. Behind this guarded sector, there would be a 500-metre-wide “protective strip” where fields could be worked only during daylight hours and under police surveillance; and behind that strip there would be a 5-kilometre-wide “forbidden zone” that could be entered only by holders of a special pass. The building of the great Iron Curtain—a term that was prophetically coined by Winston Churchill in 1946—had begun.

The GDR leadership regarded the building of this barrier as an absolute necessity if they were to maintain a labour force strong and skilled enough to forge East Germany’s economic recovery. As it happened, however, the huge fortification only partly stemmed the flood. The exodus from the east con-



tinued because one large hole in the Iron Curtain remained unplugged: the old German capital of Berlin, which, in line with an agreement reached by the Allies at the Potsdam Conference held in July and August of 1945, had been put under the joint administration of the four victorious powers, each with its own sector. In 1949, the old Soviet sector (East Berlin) had been proclaimed by the GDR as its national capital. The other sectors (West Berlin) remained an exclave, 160 kilometres inside East Germany, and GDR citizens seeking to escape to the west could still cross over easily by way of their own capital. This exit was sealed off in August 1961 by the building of the Berlin Wall, which cut through the centre of the city (*map, page 18*).

The Berlin Wall—46 kilometres of concrete 4.5 metres high and heavily fortified—sealed the creation of two entirely separate Germanys. Between 1945 and 1961, some 3.5 million Germans, many of them skilled workers, had fled from the east to the west. After 1961, the flow of refugees—previously as many as 20,000 leaving in a single day—fell to an insignificant trickle.

For the first time, the population of East Germany was falling only marginally each year, primarily by virtue of a death rate that exceeded the birth rate; and, given a stabilized labour force, the GDR was at last able to achieve a steady economic growth.

By the 1970s, that growth had so greatly accelerated that East Germany, like the Federal Republic a decade before, could claim to have worked a *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle). West Germany had become the world’s fourth largest industrial power—after the United States, the Soviet Union and Japan. East Germany, with its far smaller work force, had risen to eighth place among industrial nations. Thus, on either side of the great divide, German people had built a new Germany in which they could take immeasurable pride; and they had achieved this even though they were adhering to fundamentally opposite socio-economic and political systems.

Today, the “German nation” comprises approximately 61 million people in the Federal Republic, and nearly 17 million in the GDR. All may be accur-

ately identified as Germans, and yet they are divided between two systems of such diametrically opposed natures that any study of that “nation” must inevitably involve dual examples. East or west, the German people share certain national traits and traditions. But their lifestyles and environments have significantly changed since their land was surrendered.

The nature of these changes, and the dramatic suddenness with which they were brought about, can perhaps be best conveyed by recalling the events in one German community that, at the end of the war, found itself split by the invisible line that was soon to become the east-west frontier. Such a place was Zicherie-Böckwitz, twin hamlets overrun by American troops in April 1945, during the last weeks of the Allied Forces’ advance across Germany.

To the American soldiers, Zicherie-Böckwitz, 150 kilometres west of Berlin, looked much like hundreds of other north German villages—a cluster of low, red-roofed buildings, most of them farmhouses, nestling in a hollow; a small central square with a red sandstone memorial dedicated to villagers lost in World War I; and, beyond it, the village *Gasthaus* (inn), the schoolhouse and the blacksmith’s forge. But there was one major difference. This community was really formed of two overlapping villages, evenly populated, and each with its own mayor. Hence it still had two names: Zicherie for the western half, Böckwitz for the eastern half.

The separate identity of the united villages was a reminder that Germany had been a collection of independent states until as late as 1871, when unification was finally forged under Prussian leadership. The two villages had developed apart because at one time



Equipped with powerful binoculars and cameras to record any suspicious activity, two soldiers from the 50,000-strong East German border command scan a section of the frontier with West Germany. To reduce defections, the soldiers always work in pairs.

the border of the old kingdoms of Prussia and Hanover had run directly between them, following the course of a tiny stream, the Teiternitz. However, by the late 19th century, this border had become an invisible seam. Zicherie and Böckwitz melded into a single community of some 500 inhabitants. For generations, people of the twin hamlets intermarried. Their children attended the one village school. The farmers drank at the same *Gasthaus*, took their milk to the same dairy, used the same blacksmith and carpenter.

Then, on the afternoon of July 1, 1945, the small world of Zicherie-Böckwitz was radically changed. That day, following the withdrawal of the American troops, Soviet soldiers drove into Böckwitz, parked their motor vehicles across the main street leading into Zicherie, and so, temporarily, marked one small part of the western border of the newly created Soviet zone of occupation. The two villages were never the same again.

The next morning, the farmers from Zicherie drove as usual into Böckwitz to take their milk to the dairy. The Soviets stopped them, checked their

identities, then let them pass. “See you tomorrow,” said the farmers to friends and relatives when they drove home in the evening. But there was no tomorrow. Thereafter, only children—on their way to the schoolhouse in Böckwitz—were allowed to go east of Zicherie. And eventually that courtesy, too, was to be denied.

The story of the Zicherie-Böckwitz community in the post-war years is, to a degree, the story in miniature of the German nation. Like Germany as a whole, this community was divided down the centre in accordance with the 1944 agreement by the Allied powers. The government stipulated that, at war’s end, the boundary between the Soviet zone of occupation and the zones of the British and American forces would follow old provincial borders from Lübeck Bay on the Baltic down to the 1937 Bavarian frontier with Czechoslovakia. Of course, most Germans were totally unaware of the existence of this agreement when the war finally ended on May 8, 1945. Tens of thousands decided to flee westward from Soviet-occupied territory and they settled down as soon as they encountered British or U.S. forces. But then, on July 1, President Truman and Marshal Stalin agreed by telegram that all the forces of the Western Allies should be pulled back immediately from the designated Soviet zone. Most civilians were given four days’ notice of the Soviet advance. In those four days, thousands of Germans moved further west; and millions more followed over the next few years before the east-west border was effectively sealed.

The villagers of Zicherie and Böckwitz—without any advance warning—were among the first Germans to find themselves suddenly separated from

their friends and relatives by the new frontier. An old farmer of Zicherie recalls that, for several years, it remained easy enough to slip over the border by crossing over fields or through woods at night, or by bribing Soviet guards with home-made schnapps. "But this became impossible when East German guards took over. They were much stricter and they would not even let children cross the border to attend school. For two years, until a new school was built, our children only had occasional lessons from the local parson and other volunteer teachers."

One man who crossed to the western side before the tightening of border security was Adolf Matthies, who became the village's *Bürgermeister*. Soon afterwards, in May 1952, he and other villagers looked on in anger as a party of East German workers began erecting a solid wooden fence, 3 metres high, across the main street leading into Böckwitz, and extending it for more than 100 metres on each side. Matthies recalled: "No sooner had they finished than we started cutting holes in the fence to see what was happening on the other side. We could see the landlord of the *Gasthaus* being marched off with his family. I remember he was carrying a little baby on his arm. We said to each other, 'Shall we get our tractors and break the fence down?' But we didn't. Not long afterwards, we heard that ten families had been forcibly evacuated from the village, and two weeks later another ten were moved out and forced to live in the east of Saxony. Looking back, we were glad that we did not break down the fence because no one was harmed and because nineteen of those twenty families eventually escaped and settled in Zicherie."

Today, beside the main street lead-

ing eastward out of Zicherie, a huge boulder bears the painted words: DEUTSCHLAND IST UNTEILBAR, meaning "Germany Is Indivisible". But the view ahead contradicts the legend. A red-and-white boom straddles the main street. Beyond it, where once the *Gasthaus* and smithy stood, is a desolate strip of land and, standing among weeds, a sign warns that here is the dividing line between East and West Germany. Beyond the sign is a post painted in East Germany's national colours (black, red and gold), bearing a grey plaque with the hammer-and-compass symbol of the GDR. Beyond this, the strip of no-man's land is closed off by a 3-metre-high metal fence with finely meshed netting, and, only a few paces further on, there is another barrier: a 4-metre-high concrete wall, painted dazzling white, floodlit at night, and constantly overlooked by armed guards in a 40-metre-high watchtower. Apart from two rooftops, nothing of Böckwitz can be seen from Zicherie. The twin villages have been totally separated.

Older villagers in Zicherie say that the barricades have become such a familiar part of the landscape that they barely notice them. Nevertheless, they remain very conscious of the danger of venturing too near them. Some years ago, three young men, the worse for drink on the day of the village's annual festival, staggered on to the strip of wasteland at the end of the high street and started to hurl imprecations and empty wine bottles in the direction of the wall. East German guards seized them. One of the youths was sentenced to prison for a year, and the others for two and a half years.

It is the deliberate policy of the Federal Republic to have no fixed barriers

between the two Germanys. However, the East Germans have built barricades as much as 50 metres inside their territory and often there is nothing more than a signpost to identify the edge of the forbidden strip in front of the fortifications. Consequently, there is a very real danger of West Germans unwittingly venturing on to GDR land where they risk being arrested, or perhaps fired upon. To reduce this danger is one of the functions of West Germany's 20,000-strong Federal Border Police Force.

On the opposite side, the border is guarded not by policemen, but by 45,000 soldiers, most of them young men conscripted for 18 months and now serving in the Border Command of the GDR. Over the years, some 3,000 East German border guards have deserted to the west. As a result, tighter restrictions ensure that border guards are no longer allowed out on patrol alone. Moreover, they are forbidden to communicate with anyone on the western side; merely acknowledging a wave can incur a penalty of three weeks' detention. West German border policemen say they never get used to the eerie silence that ensues from this prohibition. "It is so unreal," says one long-serving officer. "Here we are—all Germans in uniform, they on that side, we on this—and we cannot even say 'hello' to each other. It is madness."

How has this total separation affected the lives of the villagers of Zicherie and Böckwitz? It has proved an advantage to the former, but a disadvantage to the latter. The people of Zicherie soon turned it to their advantage by applying for a grant out of funds set aside by the West German government, to be used for the development of border areas deprived of their hinterland. The

In their small East Berlin flat, a young newspaper vendor and his student wife breakfast with their family. To boost the birthrate, the GDR gives interest-free loans to couples who marry before the age of 26. As children are born, repayments are reduced; a third baby cancels the debt.



money paid for major road and drainage improvements. Ironically, too, the Iron Curtain ensured that Zicherie was less isolated. A community so close to the frontier became a curiosity—and so, every year, many thousands of West Germans drive from afar to see the village that has fortifications across its high street.

Zicherie has visibly prospered since the war. Its nucleus of old russet brick

farmhouses is now fringed by a scattering of modern houses and bungalows, all with potted plants and white net curtains in their windows. Every house has modern kitchen appliances, colour television and good quality furniture. Each family has at least one car—most commonly, a Volkswagen model. In fact, it is to West Germany's gigantic Volkswagen company that Zicherie's inhabitants owe much of their post-war

prosperity. In 1938, the company established its headquarters at Wolfsburg, 20 kilometres south-west of Zicherie and Böckwitz. After the war, the Volkswagen factory achieved a spectacular growth, and now about one third of Zicherie's working population is employed there.

For Böckwitz, the creation of the east-west barrier has had the opposite effect: the village, like other communi-

ties close to the eastern side of the frontier, has become both isolated and less prosperous because it is inside the 5-kilometre “forbidden zone”, which no East German may enter without a special permit—and no Westerner may enter under any circumstances. Worse, the village falls mainly within the 500-metre “protective strip” where every movement of the populace is watched—if not by border guards, then by informers appointed by the authorities. Hence, security is so strict that no one may own a ladder without a special permit; and here a midnight curfew is permanently enforced, restricting late-night social activities and limiting outings to distant towns or villages. There is, of course, television; like most citizens of the GDR, people living within the restricted zone can readily tune in to West German channels. But this only serves as a telling reminder of the freedoms they are being denied.

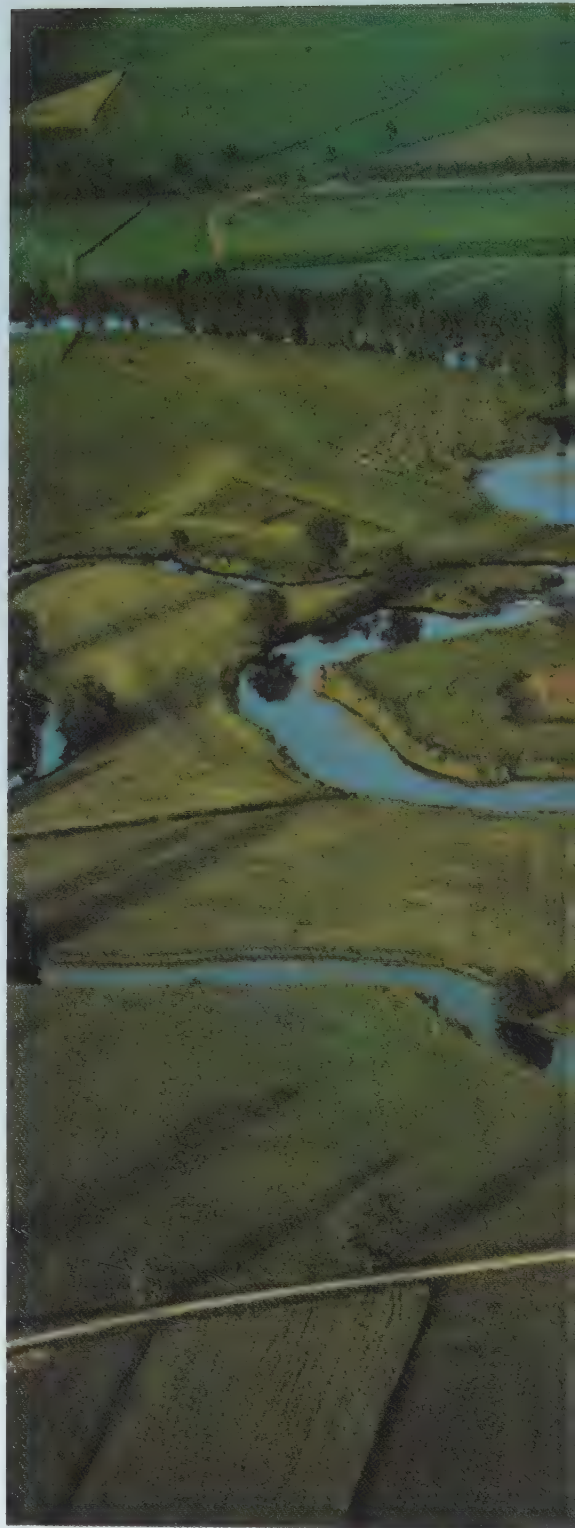
Not surprisingly, according to some villagers in Zicherie, young people invariably move away from Böckwitz at the first opportunity. Now the village has fewer than 100 inhabitants, and most are elderly. They may possess small plots of land to grow fruit and vegetables for their own needs, but nowadays, if they wish to farm for a living, they need to join an agricultural co-operative. (Most agriculture holdings in the GDR were collectivized in 1959–60. Now about 95 per cent of the land is farmed by co-operatives, which total almost 4,000 and employ 92 per cent of the country’s landworkers.)

It is impossible to obtain a more detailed, first-hand picture of Böckwitz because no Westerner has access to the village. People in Zicherie can only see friends at the other end of their high street by arranging a rendezvous some-

where in East Germany, at least 5 kilometres beyond the border. They must make a long detour, motoring nearly 40 kilometres south to the nearest of the nine road-crossings between the Federal Republic and the GDR; then when they arrive, there are the tedious formalities of the border to be faced.

Over the years, the polarized positions of the two Germanys have become clearly defined. West Germany, a country with a total area of 248,630 square kilometres (including the 480 square kilometres of West Berlin) and divided into 11 federal states (*Länder*), is a self-governing republic firmly integrated into the Western political and socio-economic systems. It is a full member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and of the European Economic Community (EEC), and it has a form of democratic government that combines elements of the British parliamentary system and of American federalism. East Germany, covering 108,333 square kilometres and divided into 15 districts (*Bezirke*), is a Communist state forming part of the Soviet bloc. It is a member of the Warsaw Treaty Organization and of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon), and it has a Soviet-style system of government.

In West Germany, elections for all legislative bodies are general, direct and secret, and every citizen who has attained the age of 18 is eligible for a vote and is free to stand as a parliamentary candidate. The labour laws recognize that the workers have the right to engage in free collective bargaining and that trade union members can call strikes if necessary. In East Germany, political power is permanently held by the 2.2 million-member Socialist Unity





In the fertile countryside of northern Bavaria, the River Würnitz winds placidly past russet-roofed farmhouses set amongst fields of oats and barley. The mixed crops and narrow fields typify the traditional small-scale farming that survives in the southern part of West Germany.

Party (SED) or, to be more precise, by the 25 leading members of the SED who make up the Politburo, a self-perpetuating body whose decisions influence every aspect of life in the GDR. There is no legal opposition; and the Constitution no longer states, as in its original 1949 version, that citizens have “the right to strike” and “the right to emigrate”.

The West German economy is based on the principle of the free “social market” economy that was introduced in 1948 under the auspices of the Western Allies. This system, operating under the tenet of “as little state as possible, as much state as necessary”, tries to promote individual economic initiative in a competitive market, and at the same time rejects the social injustices of 19th-century *laissez-faire* capitalism and the inflexibility and authoritarianism of the state-planned economy. By statutory means, the government is able to curb practices and agreements—for example, cartels and syndicates—that are liable to influence market conditions by restricting competition. However, a few key enterprises—most notably the German Federal Post Office and German Federal Railways—are in public ownership; agriculture is heavily subsidized and, like other sectors of the economy, subject to the regulations governing the EEC.

In East Germany, market forces of supply and demand are not allowed to dictate volume of production and prices. All major industries and enterprises are nationalized; and the GDR operates a fully centralized and planned economy in which the state, as directed by the Socialist Unity Party, has total control of means of production and distribution. To a large extent, the state planners rationalize the use of scarce



resources, decide on many production priorities, set long-term growth objectives, control prices, and even fix profit levels and investment patterns for the individual industries and plants.

Thus, in almost every way, the political and socio-economic philosophies of the two Germanys are diametrically opposed. Indeed, East and West Germany take a fundamentally different view of how they relate to one another. Contrary to the GDR attitude, the Federal Republic officially recognizes that Germans—whether living in the east or west—are still one people forming a single nation. Although both East and West Germany are independently members of the United Nations, the latter still does not recognize the former as a separate nation. It maintains its viewpoint that there is only one Germany: a nation composed of two sovereign states.

In *Facts About Germany*, a government publication widely distributed abroad, the West German attitude is expressed as follows: “Almost 40 per cent of the inhabitants of the Federal Republic have relatives or acquaintances in the GDR; leading Federal German politicians were born in what is now GDR territory, leading GDR politicians in

what is now the Federal Republic. This is a degree of personal intertwinement that can rarely occur between alien nations. But, above all, the inhabitants of both the Federal Republic and the GDR continue to feel as members of one German nation, linked by a common language and history and many other common heritages which cannot simply be wiped away from one day to the next.”

Guided by this attitude, West Germany refuses to recognize East Germany as a foreign country in terms of international law; and this gives rise to a number of peculiarities in the relationship between the two Germanys. For example, the Federal Republic imposes no import duty on products coming from the GDR and charges mail going to East Germany at the inland postal rate. Moreover, there are no exchange rates between the currencies of the two German states. Furthermore, West Germany does not have a constitution. Instead it has a *Grundgesetz* (Basic Law), a term chosen in 1949 when it was felt that a definitive constitution should not be written until the reunification of Germany. The last article of the Basic Law states explicitly: “This Basic Law shall cease to be in

On a co-operative farm in the south-west of the GDR (left), women plant tree seedlings; a notice board (below) praises the skills of two of the co-op members. Women run one in three of East Germany's 4,000 agricultural co-operatives, and make up 42 per cent of the farming and forestry work force.



force on the day on which a constitution adopted by a free decision of the German people comes into force."

In keeping with this lingering hope, successive West German governments have persisted in recognizing June 17 as the Day of German Unity, a public holiday commemorating the anniversary of the brief uprising in East Germany against Communist rule in 1953. That day, construction workers in East Berlin protested at higher work norms decreed by the government, and their action triggered off strikes in many other cities of the GDR as workers *en masse* expressed their disapproval of the regime. In East Berlin, demonstrations were suppressed by Soviet tanks; 21 demonstrators died and many more were injured. Officially, West Germans celebrate the anniversary as proof of the undying determination of all Germans to achieve reunification. But, in reality, most West Germans see no real purpose in the celebrations—a fact reflected a few years ago in a poll that showed more than 70 per cent of the population of the Federal Republic believed that formal unity with East Germany was no longer possible.

This has become an inescapable conclusion in the light of the GDR's official

attitude towards reunification. Originally, East Germany's Constitution described itself as a "socialist state of the German nation". But not any more. Now, in the words of its revised (1974) Constitution, it is "a socialist state of workers and peasants" and it is "forever and irrevocably allied with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics".

The majority of East Germans naturally feel closer to the people of West Germany than to any of their non-German-speaking Warsaw Pact allies and neighbours. Moreover, several million East Germans have friends and relatives in the Federal Republic. But the GDR leadership takes the view that there can be no real bridge between capitalism and socialism, and that people living under such opposite social systems must develop entirely different values and a different consciousness. It therefore stresses the differences between East and West Germany, rejects any notions of a reunified nation, and discourages east-west contacts by travel restrictions.

West Berliners are allowed to spend no more than 45 days a year in the Germany that surrounds them. This is a restriction imposed by the GDR leadership to underline its objections

to West Berlin's far-reaching integration into the legal, economic and social systems of West Germany. The official GDR view is that West Berlin, still technically governed by Britain, France and the United States, is an "independent political unit" devoid of any ties with the West German state.

All other citizens of the Federal Republic are permitted to visit East Germany as often, and for as long, as they wish. But the cost of this privilege is high. There is a charge for each visa issued; also a tax on motorists for "the use of East German roads"—a charge that seems harsh since the Federal Republic has contributed millions of Deutsche Marks towards the construction and improvement of *Autobahn* links with Berlin. The West German government, seeking to encourage contact between the two Germanys, foots the bill for car tax. But, in addition to paying for a visa, the individual traveller still has the burden of excessive currency exchange rates. Every day, any Western visitor who is not staying at an East German hotel must change a fixed amount into East German currency. The West German gets only one GDR mark for one Deutsche Mark, compared with an unofficial exchange rate of at least four-for-one on the black market. There is no special reduction fee made for pensioners, and money changed cannot be reconverted or taken out of the GDR.

Significantly, in October 1980, the East German government tripled the currency exchange demand to a minimum DM 25 per day. By this means, they maintained the level of income derived from West German visitors at the same time as achieving a 40 per cent reduction in the number of Westerners visiting friends and relatives in the

VILLAGE WAYS IN THE INDUSTRIAL HEARTLAND



Allotments of the Eisenheim colony form an oasis of greenery amid Oberhausen's industry.



Father and son take home a barrowful of cabbages grown on their back garden plot.

The Ruhr is the industrial heartland of West Germany. Its cities form one vast, sprawling conurbation sometimes called *Ruhrstadt* ("Ruhr City"); and here some four million people are crowded together, many housed in high-rise blocks that overlook a grey and sooty world of coal mines, steel foundries, rolling mills and blast furnaces that belch smoke-clouds by day and inflame the sky at night. Yet, remarkably, in this industrial inferno, thousands of workers still enjoy a semi-rural lifestyle—growing their own vegetables, keeping livestock, and generally preserving the close-knit atmosphere of a village.

One such community is the Eisenheim miners' colony in the industrial city of Oberhausen.

Here, some 140 families live cheek-by-jowl with coking plant buildings and blast furnaces. They live in 39 two-storey buildings built between 1844 and 1901. Behind these flats, on family allotments, miners grow produce and keep goats, chickens, rabbits and pigs. Twice a year, a butcher slaughters pigs, and the meat is stored in family freezers.

Eisenheim is the oldest of more than 1,000 colonies established in the Ruhr in the 19th century by coal-mining companies to house their workers. Its traditional way of life was threatened in 1958 when the landlords planned to replace the dwellings with 10 and 15 storey blocks. But the miners campaigned for two decades and, in the late

1970s, they won protection for their urban village under the Historic Buildings and Monuments Act; the authorities agreed to modernize their existing homes. Since then, other mining communities have been encouraged to fight high-rise flats and so maintain pockets of country life within the engine room of the German economy.



A butcher guts a pig on a biannual visit to the urban village.



From an attic window, a retired miner keeps an eye on his pigeons.



Eisenheim residents relax in a social centre, originally wash-houses.

east. The pragmatism of the GDR leadership is made still more obvious in the ruling that allows only East Germans of retirement age—65 for men and 60 for women—complete freedom to visit the west. These privileged citizens are no longer of value to the GDR; and if they should choose to stay permanently in West Germany, the GDR is then instantly relieved of the onus of providing their old-age pensions.

Every year West Germans manage to clock up more than eight million visits to East Germany. However, excluding old-age pensioners, fewer than 50,000 East Germans are able to obtain permission to travel west. They are privileged businessmen, trade union officials and prominent party members, or else ordinary citizens who can prove they have special personal reasons for making a private visit to West Germany—for example, to attend a silver wedding anniversary party, a confirmation or funeral of a blood relation. In contrast, East German old-age pensioners make more than 1.5 million visits to West Germany every year—an incredibly high figure considering that the total number of pensioners in the GDR is approximately 3.2 million. So it is that one of the jokes in West Germany is that the GDR is the one country in the world where people can look forward to growing old.

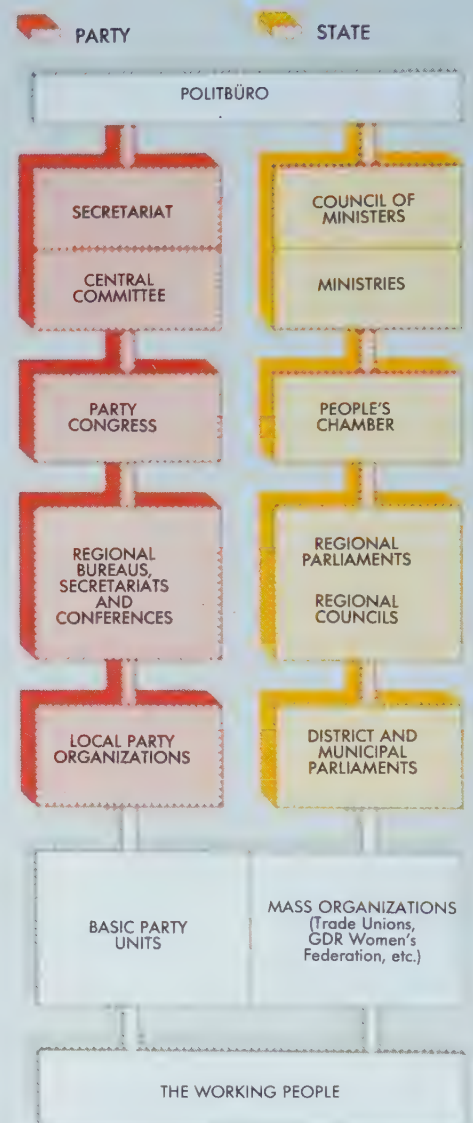
Over the years East Germans have displayed extraordinary courage and ingenuity in their attempt to reach the west. Freedom-seekers have escaped across the border by tunnelling, swimming, and hiding in the bodywork of motor vehicles; by hijacked railway train, by breeches-buoy and by tight-rope walking over the Berlin Wall, even by hiding in a stuffed and mounted cow

AN ALLIANCE OF STATE AND PARTY

The German Democratic Republic is not, officially, a single-party state: five political parties, allied with trade unions and other mass organizations, work towards a socialist society. But within this coalition—known as the National Front—the Socialist Unity Party (SED) is the dominant force. Its hegemony is enshrined in the GDR's Constitution, which affirms that the state is "led by the working class and its Marxist-Leninist party".

Every workplace has its SED unit. From this base, activists may join local and regional organizations, and serve as delegates to the Party Congress, which meets every five years to elect the Central Committee—usually 25 members. Real power, however, lodges with the Secretariat in charge of the party bureaucracy. At its head is the General Secretary, who is also the leader of the Politburo. This élite, about 25 senior party officials, ministers and military officers, is the source and arbiter of public policy.

Every tier of government—from the municipal parliament, looking after village affairs, to the People's Chamber, passing laws for the nation—is dominated by SED members. At elections, there is a single list of official candidates, compiled by the National Front and including a token number from the minority parties. Participation in the democratic process is zealously encouraged, and about 98 per cent of the electorate turns out to vote.



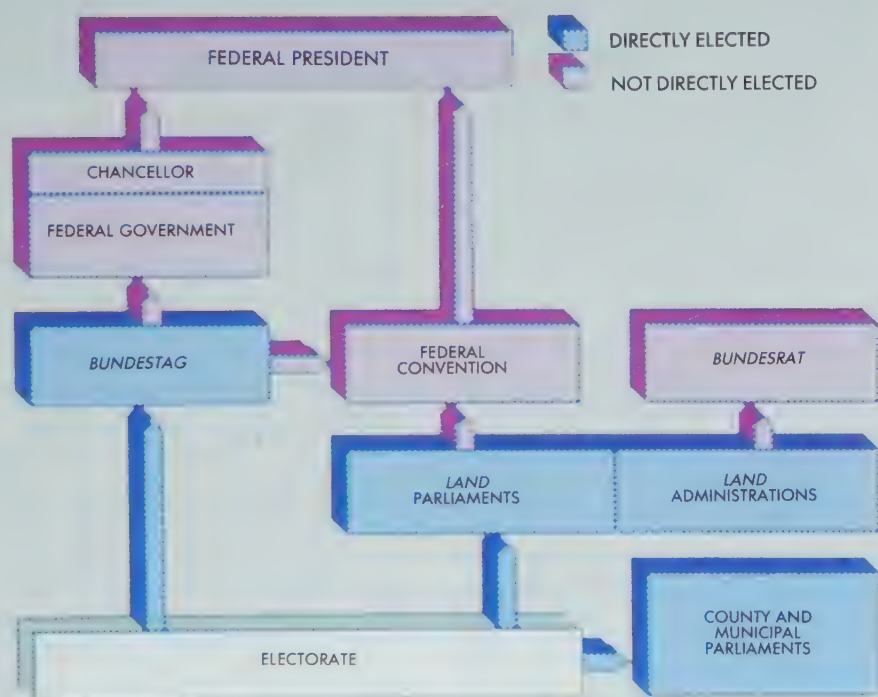
on its way to a West German dairy show. Especially remarkable was the successful escape in 1979 of two couples, the Strelzyks and the Wetzels, each with two children. In September that year—shortly before the start of the celebrations for the 30th anniversary of the GDR—they crossed the “impenetrable” frontier at a height of 2,500 metres, riding in a colossal, multi-coloured, home-made hot-air balloon, to land near Naila, a small West German town 20 kilometres west of Hof in northern Bavaria.

That flight from the East German town of Pössneck covered 40 kilometres and lasted no more than 28 minutes. But it was the culmination of a year and a half of nerve-racking endeavour—planning, gathering materials, building, rebuilding, contriving in secret to test-fly two balloons, each larger than a four-storey house, and once landing inside the 5-kilometre “forbidden zone”, amid woods lined with trip-wire trigger devices. Their decision to escape was noteworthy, too, because both families were well-to-do in the GDR, each pos-

sessing their own home, motor car and all basic household equipment, each with their future secure. Yet they chose to sacrifice it all in exchange for a life in the west.

Long ago, in the light of such daring escapes, West Germans had a wry saying that roughly translates: “If the government ever demolishes its east-west barriers you had better climb a tree—otherwise you will be trampled to death in the rush.” The saying had obvious validity in the desperate years following the building of the Berlin Wall,

A COHESIVE FEDERATION OF STATES



West Germany is a federal republic, a union of 11 separate, internally self-governing states (*Länder*), each with its own elected parliament and administration. Within this system, citizens' interests are represented in two ways: through 518 deputies directly elected to the *Bundestag*, the nation's parliament, and, indirectly, through the *Bundesrat* (Federal Council), comprising 45 delegates appointed by the governments of the states themselves.

The delegates of the *Bundestag* plus an equal number of delegates sent by the state parliaments form the Federal Convention, which elects the Federal President. The president's powers are largely symbolic: he ratifies government appointments, signs treaties, and represents West Germany abroad. Real political power rests with the Federal Chancellor. Elected by the *Bundestag* for a four-year term, he directs federal policy and proposes the ministers responsible for turning these policies into action.

when, every year, thousands risked their lives in seeking to follow the 2.7 million East Germans who had crossed to West Germany between 1949 and 1961. But nowadays, when there are less than 1,000 people escaping in any one year, it is not so certain that the removal of the Iron Curtain would trigger a mass stampede westwards.

Of course, it can be argued that the number of escapes from East Germany is much lower because the security measures have become more sophisticated since 1961. Only 1 per cent of refugees now choose to escape by way of the Berlin Wall or the border death-strip; the rest flee by more devious means—for example, via another East European country while there on holiday, or perhaps by seeking political asylum in the west after convincing the GDR authorities that they can be trusted to visit West Germany privately, or as a member of some overseas trade delegation or sports team. Logically too, it may be argued that the very existence of the Berlin Wall and the death-strip is proof enough that the GDR government still fears the possibility of a mass exodus to the west.

Nevertheless, there are good reasons for believing that a large, indeterminate number of East Germans have come to accept life in a Communist Germany. As a West German journalist observed a few years ago after working as a correspondent in the GDR: "Sometimes we forget that the majority of the seventeen million people living in East Germany have come to terms with the regimented political and social system governing them. Most of them have accepted the German Democratic Republic as their home—just as it is, in spite of its imperfections."

But there is more to it than that. A



In a delicatessen in East Berlin's Alexanderplatz, shoppers pause before a lavish array of meats and sausages. This well-stocked store, part of a new shopping complex, is government controlled—and caters only for servicemen, government officials and Eastern-bloc tourists.

great number of East Germans—irrespective of their political beliefs—take positive pride in belonging to a country which, with a relatively small population, has managed to become the second greatest industrial power (after the Soviet Union) in the Eastern bloc, and even more astonishingly, the strongest sporting nation, per capita, in the world. The GDR first established its sporting supremacy at the 1976 Olympic Games in Montreal by winning more medals than any other participating country except the Soviet Union, which has a population 15 times greater than the GDR. Remarkably it even managed to outscore the United States, whose population is 14 times the size of the GDR.

It is significant, too, that there is now emerging a second generation of East Germans who have never experienced life in a non-Communist environment,

and who, like the generation before them, are systematically taught to appreciate the principles and benefits of Marxism-Leninism. To be sure, they are well informed about the way of life in the west via West German television, which the majority of East Germans can, and do, watch regularly. They see a Germany offering greater freedom and higher living standards. But at the same time they see a more permissive, violent, materialistic and competitive society where the wealth of the nation is less evenly divided among its inhabitants and where ordinary citizens are continually exposed to the twin perils that go with a free market economy: inflation and unemployment.

At the same time, of course, many East Germans see plenty to criticize in their own country: the much-loathed restrictions on travel abroad, the constant political pressures in everyday

Returning empty beer bottles in a string bag, a man heads for a shop along a cobbled street in the East German city of Weimar. Prudent shoppers always keep a bag handy, in case goods in scarce supply, such as chocolate and oranges, suddenly appear in the shops.

life; the frequent shortages arising in a thousand and one things, from fresh vegetables and imported fruits to safety pins and ballpoint pens; the poor quality of many consumer goods; the long wait for certain "luxuries"—for example, 10 years or more for the delivery of a new car; the innumerable perks and privileges accorded Communist party functionaries in a professedly egalitarian society.

Still, the fact remains that East Germans enjoy the highest living standards in the entire Communist world—including the Soviet Union. As in the Federal Republic, almost all households have a television set, refrigerator and a washing machine. Only 37 per cent of households own a private car, compared with 62 per cent in West Germany; however, this represents a huge advance since the 1970 figure of 16 per cent and compares very favourably with Russia's 13 per cent. Since 1960 the monthly average wage for all households has risen 100 per cent, to 1,500 marks. In the meantime, by way of vast government subsidies, the cost of many basic necessities has remained unchanged. These include potatoes, milk and rye bread—all much cheaper than in West Germany. The price of a tram ticket—one mark for a journey of any length—has not risen since the 1940s. Tickets for the theatre, cinema and sports events sell at prices established 20 years ago.

This stability in the value of the mark has been a major plus for the economy in the eyes of the East German population, among whom, until recent years, there were many who remembered the terrifying German inflation of 1923. But there are snags in government price-fixing. While the cost of certain basic items has not risen in decades, the



cost of many other items long ago classified as "luxuries"—for example, electrical gadgets, coffee, chocolates and imported fruits—has not fallen since the GDR was founded. For decades, coffee has remained hugely expensive at 70 marks per kilogram—roughly a third of the cost of a new bicycle. Moreover, while there is no private enterprise and competition to encourage price-cutting, there are frequent shortages of goods that enable prices to be pushed up on a flourishing black market.

With the advantages of a common language and the mutual window of television, the German people, east and west, are in a unique position to see close-up the many differences between everyday life under Communism and Capitalism. Comparing the two Germanys is a fascinating exercise and one that many Germans find irresistible. Overall, however, comparative facts and figures prove only that the socioeconomic systems of both Germanys have their advantages and disadvantages, and that ultimately the choice between them rests on personal and political values.

Meanwhile, year by year, the inhabitants of the two Germanys become more deeply entrenched in their positions and therefore grow further apart. They are still discernibly the same people: they possess the same tongue, though no longer the same second language (now Russian for East Germans and English for West Germans), the same cultural heritage, and so many of the same tastes and traditions. They can relate closely to one another as individuals. But the societies in which they live, and the power blocs to which they are bound, remain fundamentally incompatible.



A West German guard surveys the bogs and ditches of Jardelunder Moor, a desolate stretch of the Federal Republic's frontier with Denmark.



A WATCH ON NINE FRONTIERS

Photographs by Frieder Blickle

Along its 4,250-kilometre perimeter, the Federal Republic of Germany shares frontiers with nine countries. No other state in Europe has as many foreign neighbours on its periphery; no nation of comparable size has so many different boundaries to control. Some 6,700 armed customs officers, with 1,250 trained dogs, guard the land and water margins of West Germany, and some 20,000 border police patrol the fortified East German frontier. Security is made more onerous by the extraordinary variety of the terrain. West German frontiers run along Alpine ridges, through dense forests and bog-ridden moorland, across lakes and rivers, sometimes dividing villages, farms and even houses. Officials must patrol in all weathers—on skis in mountain blizzards, by boat during spring floods. On the other hand, most boundaries they survey are friendly; indeed, with neighbouring Switzerland, Austria and Luxembourg, cordial relations are further enhanced by the bond of a common language.



Heraldic shields representing Austria and Germany decorate a postbox located in a mountain inn, high in the Bavarian Alps. The German-Austrian border runs directly through the inn, and the proprietor has to split his taxes evenly between the two governments.

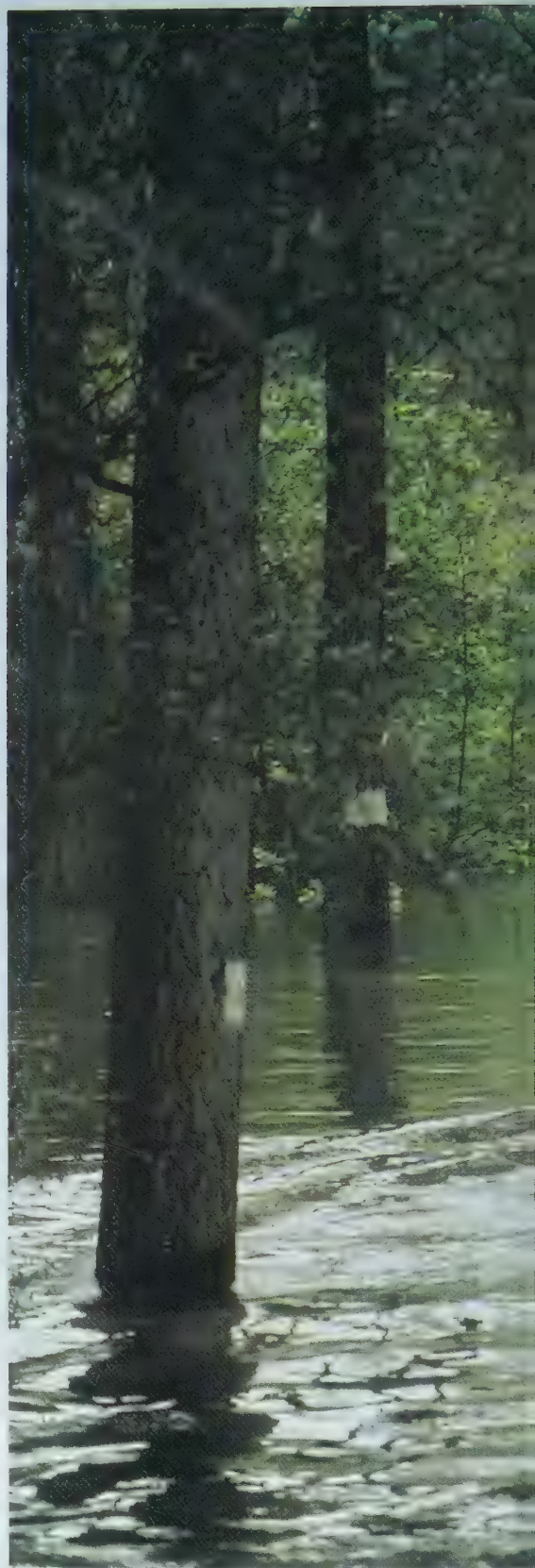


The longest West German frontier is the 1,381-kilometre border with East Germany, the shortest is the 68 kilometres abutting Denmark. The only natural boundaries lie south, where the Alps, Lake Constance and the Rhine separate West Germany from Austria, Switzerland and France.

During the floods that frequently submerge the German-French frontier on the banks of the Rhine, white daubs on trees serve as temporary border markers to guide two German customs officers to their customs house, near Karlsruhe. These officials control the access of water-borne traffic into the Federal Republic by boarding motor-barges to examine their cargoes; smaller craft have to dock at the house for inspection.



At the border village of Lichtenbusch, near the ancient city of Aachen, two officials—a Belgian (*left*) and a German (*right*)—look out from the windows of their shared customs house, which bestrides the frontier.







Near the ditch that divides his farm into West German and Danish land, a German farmer shows the passport that allows him access to both sides. A post-war boundary agreement left him his house and 38 hectares of land in the Federal Republic; his cattle graze on 11 hectares in Denmark.



Celebrating their annual festival, bandsmen of a German shooting club parade across the Dutch border that traverses the village of Suderwick. People of two nations—separated only by a boom across the high street—share a hospital, fire brigade, and each other's shops and inns.



On her way to Sunday service, a German churchgoer approaches a bridge linking West Germany with the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. Across the bridge is the only place of worship in this rural region—a Catholic church in Untereisenbach that serves both sides of the border.



Within view of a customs hut and landing-pier, a wind-surfer glides over Lake Constance, which separates Germany and Switzerland. Swimmers and pleasure-craft may cross over the 45-kilometre-long border, but anyone landing on either side is subject to passport and customs controls.



At the popular West German seaside resort of Priwall, in Lübeck Bay, GDR floats extend the east-west border 100 metres into the Baltic Sea, and warn swimmers not to stray out of bounds in these heavily patrolled waters.

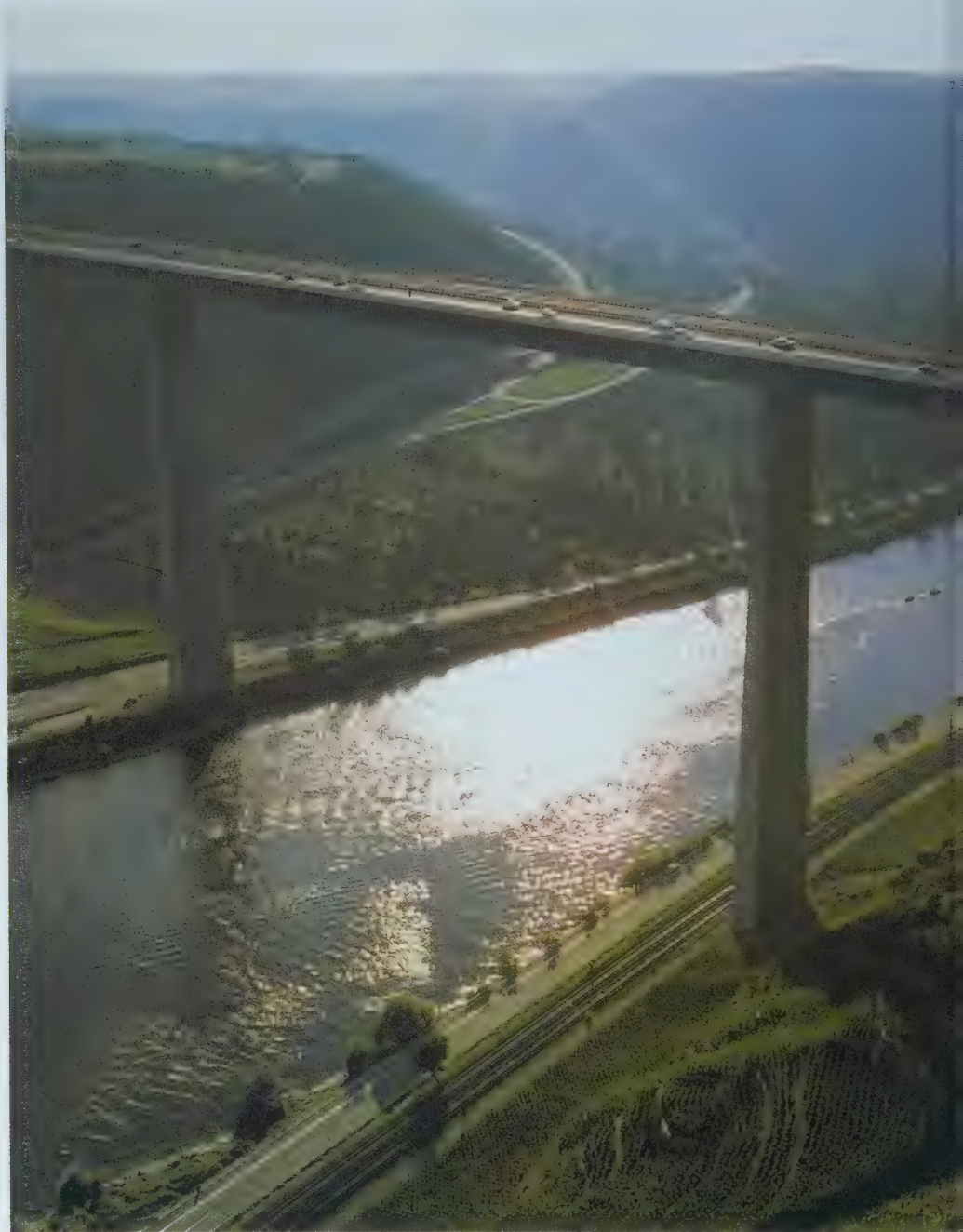


Ostensibly, only a fence and signpost mark this stretch of the Bavarian border with Czechoslovakia. But some 100 metres inside Czech territory, behind the trees, are electrified fences and watchtowers. In contrast, the Federal Republic side is so open that Czech cows often stray on to its soil.



Bearing a boundary marker emblazoned with the emblem of the Federal Republic, a customs officer treks up the 1,700-metre-high Kreuzkopf ridge that divides West Germany and Austria. In this Alpine region, local officials spend much of their time replacing boundary signs lost in blizzards and avalanches.

2





AN AMALGAM OF DIVERSE REGIONS

Prince Metternich, the 19th-century Austrian statesman, once remarked that Germany was not so much a geographical concept as an abstract one; and that the characteristic feature of the Germans was not unity but multiplicity. The observation still has considerable validity. Germany, without a qualifying adjective, remains an abstract concept, and its people can still be divided into a bewildering array of ethnic groups; among them are Westphalians, Lower Saxons, Schleswig-Holsteiners, Hamburgians, Frisians, Thuringians, Rhinelanders, Hessians, Bavarians, Swabians and Franco-nians. Historically and culturally, each ethnic group evolved separately and each continues to have its own distinct characteristics.

One fact is fundamental to an understanding of this varied and fragmented society: Germany, despite its great imprint on modern history, has known only 74 years, from 1871 to 1945, as a united nation with one capital. For centuries, while other European countries—notably Britain, France and Spain—were developing as single nation-states, Germany was a crazy quilt of more than 1,800 separate political and cultural units—kingdoms, principalities, duchies, bishoprics and free cities—loosely bonded together by their nominal allegiance to the German heirs of the ninth-century Holy Roman Emperor, Charlemagne. Far and wide, within this national “empire”, local

potentates established great seats of learning and splendid court theatres, galleries and museums. In consequence, when one kingdom (Prussia) became powerful enough to forge a single German nation in 1871, many of the cities had cultural traditions far older and more illustrious than those of Berlin, capital of the newly proclaimed German Empire. There could be no question of the kind of metropolitan domination that, by contrast, provincial France had always felt from Paris.

It is the same to this day. Germany still does not have a metropolis that approaches the predominant position of London, Paris or Rome. And this is especially true of West Germany since its reorganization on a federal basis. Bonn is its political capital, Frankfurt its financial capital, Düsseldorf its industrial capital, Karlsruhe its judicial capital. West Berlin has the greatest museums, Munich the most theatres, Heidelberg the oldest university (founded in 1386). Frankfurt has the Central Library of West Germany, Wiesbaden has the Federal Criminal Office, Hamburg the greatest concentration of newspaper publishing; and scientific academies and art collections are scattered about the land.

Another lasting effect of Germany's traditional regionalism is the relatively even distribution of population among the cities and towns of the Federal Republic. Unlike many industrialized countries—including the GDR which

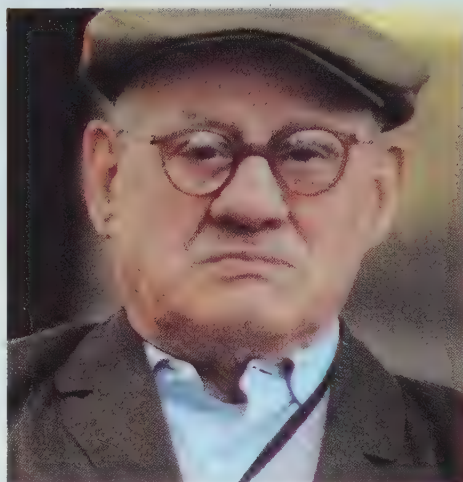
West of Koblenz, an elevated section of West Germany's vast motorway network spans the Moselle River and the railway line to Trier. Every year, some 870 million tonnes of freight are transported through the Federal Republic by rail, road and waterways.



has been redeveloped as a strictly centralized state—West Germany does not have a large majority of its people crammed into a handful of great cities. West Berlin (1.9 million inhabitants) Hamburg (1.6 m), Munich (1.3 m) and Cologne (1.0 m) are the four largest cities and yet, combined, they account for only 9 per cent of the national population. Eight other cities have populations of over half a million, another 13 have more than a quarter of a million inhabitants. And altogether some 68 towns in West Germany have a population of more than 100,000.

But the most enduring and striking mark of German regionalism is language. A unified language only began to develop in Germany from the 16th century onwards, after Martin Luther, a priest from Thuringian Saxony, had translated the Bible from Hebrew and Greek into vernacular German that he hoped all Germanic peoples would be able to comprehend. Even now, Germans often have difficulty in under-

standing the dialect of some distant region. Moreover, virtually all of the German people can be regionally placed by their dialect: the Hamburgians with their slightly metallic accent and their English-style pronunciation of the “st” and “sp” consonants; the farmers and fishermen of the far north with their slow-moving *Plattdeutsch* (“Low German”); Berliners with their quick-witted, inimitable slang; the Swabians with a charming drawl that



appears to instill immediate confidence; the Bavarians with their sonorous tongue that is so often punctuated with unselfconscious little curses; the Saxons with a flat, rather monotonous accent that many other Germans regard as being uniquely ugly.

Regional differences also extend to traditional architecture and dress, and even to the menus in local inns. For example, *Spätzle*—noodles looking like knotted spaghetti—are usually offered in the south-west in place of potatoes, whereas the Bavarians in the south-east prefer dumplings and a fried slice of pâté-like meat called *Leberkäs*. The

Thuringians have their distinctly flavoured *Bratwurst* (fried sausage). In the Rhineland, *Blutwurst* (black pudding) is a speciality. Further to the north-east, people love a stew of pears, beans and bacon, or *Kasseler Rippenspeer*, smoked pork chops served with sauerkraut. And a popular dish of the north is *Labskaus* with mashed potatoes, pickled gherkins and corned beef or fish.

More significantly, many Germans also firmly believe that members of the various regional groups can be identified by traits of behaviour and character. From one generation to the next, the notions of tribal stereotypes are handed down: fun-loving, easy-going Rhinelanders; phlegmatic Westphalians; thrifty, industrious Swabians; earthy, rumbustious Bavarians; taciturn Frisians and so on. Such age-old stereotypes abound in German literature, in the theatre, and especially in satirical cabaret—a traditional form of entertainment still popular in both Germanys—and they remain firmly



entrenched in the popular imagination. Germans tend to believe that each group has a quality all of its own, and usually that their own group is best. Interregional sniping—sometimes good-humoured, sometimes malicious—persists; and, according to one German sociologist, only the West Berliners, who have refined a peculiarly dead-pan sense of humour that captures their absurd position in the heart of the GDR, seem prepared to laugh about themselves rather than others. This local rivalry is so real that each West German *Land* takes care to ensure that the regional minority groups within its territory are fairly represented in all of its major institutions.

Thus, the division of Germany into various ethnic groups has formal recognition. At the same time, however, it is becoming increasingly difficult to define the main areas of these groups. After World War II, some new states were formed in the Federal Republic by an amalgamation of old regions. For

example, the creation in 1946 of the *Land* of North-Rhine Westphalia—formed by combining part of the old Rhine Province with the province of Westphalia and the county of Lippe—joined together such disparate groups as Rhinelanders and Westphalians. Meanwhile, the regional mix became more confused by the greatest migration in history: the post-war influx of



Some succeeded; others became assimilated almost without trace. The East Prussians, for example, brought with them a distinct dialect that is dying out because it is no longer spoken in the GDR and no longer learnt by the younger generation in West Germany. Altogether, more than 1.9 million refugees from eastern territories settled in Bavaria. Virtually all the children of those refugees now speak with a heavy Bavarian accent and regard themselves as being essentially Bavarian.

The integration of the expellees and refugees did not present long-term difficulties because they were German-speaking and because, after initial years of hardship, a fast-growing economy enabled this extra manpower to be fully employed. Moreover, many were highly skilled and able to set up their own enterprises. Unfortunately, such smooth integration was not possible for

some 3.5 million German refugees from the GDR and 8.5 million Germans expelled from eastern territories of the old Reich that had been allocated to Poland or the Soviet Union under the terms of the Potsdam Conference.

Suddenly huge groups of Brandenburgers, East Prussians, Pomeranians, Saxons, Silesians and Thuringians were settled among different groups in the west. Many formed expatriate associations, the *Landmannschaften*, and organized reunions at which they wore their traditional costumes and sought to keep alive their ethnic traditions.



From the Nordic blondeness of a Leipzig schoolgirl wearing the uniform of a GDR youth group (*far left*) to the dark hair and ruddy cheeks of a middle-aged Bavarian in traditional costume (*far right*), the faces of Germany differ as widely as the regions to which they belong.

the next wave of settlers: foreigners—mainly Turks, Yugoslavs, Italians, Greeks, Spaniards and Portuguese—who were encouraged to seek employment in West Germany during the economic boom of the 1960s. These immigrants now number approximately 4.6 million, comprising 1.9 million so-called *Gastarbeiter* (“guest workers”) and their dependants. They make up more than 7.5 per cent of the total West German population, and this percentage is steadily increasing because roughly one out of every eight live births in the Federal Republic is to a foreign resident.

The majority of the *Gastarbeiter* and their families maintain their ethnic lifestyles and traditions. As a result, they have brought a cosmopolitan flavour to cities and many provincial towns, and they have generally added

to the already immense variety of German life. But many of them—particularly the 1.5 million Turks with their very different culture and religion—may never become fully integrated; and so, to a large degree, they may be said to have also contributed to the traditionally fragmented nature of the German nation.

Appropriately enough, the extraordinary variety of the German people is more than matched by the variety of their physical environment. Diversity is the outstanding characteristic of the German landscape: there are 356,963 square kilometres of low and high mountain ranges, of picturesque lakes and huge belts of forest, of winding valleys and wide, open lowlands. And this diversity extends to the work of man. Germany has a wealth of Roman ruins

(amphitheatres, aqueducts, fortresses and baths), hundreds of ancient castles and churches, innumerable towns and villages with half-timbered houses and narrow cobbled streets seemingly frozen in time. And yet today, never far away, are the monuments of a highly advanced technology—ultramodern highways and rail expressways, great flyovers and bridges, nuclear power stations, skyscrapers and colossal apartment blocks.

Most impressive, in West Germany, are the super-efficient rail and road networks. On seeing these transport systems—more than 7,500 kilometres of high-speed motorways (*Autobahnen*) and the nationalized railways (*Deutsche Bundesbahn*) with their luxurious Trans-European expresses and fast, reliable inter-city services—it is difficult to believe that, for centuries, German communications lagged far behind those of Britain, and a number of other leading West European countries. But such was the case: until the mid-19th century, German roads were primitive, waterways underdeveloped. Again, regionalism was to blame; in a disunited and predominantly agricultural Germany there were no real incentives to increase the mobility of goods and people. Progress did not really begin until 1835 when the first German railway (actually British steam trains operated by British crews) opened in Bavaria, between Nuremberg and Fürth. Soon afterwards, other German states were developing their own railways—on a scale that revolutionized life by paving the way for the belated industrial revolution of the 1850s and 1860s.

Towards the turn of the century, work was started on a second important system of communications: navigable inland waterways and canals.



In the Rhine Valley, workers hand-pick ripe grapes growing on slopes that are too steep for modern machinery. The grapes are white Riesling, a hardy species that can withstand harsh winters. West Germany produces more than 1.6 billion litres of wine each year.



As morning breaks over the Mönckebergstrasse, a main artery of Hamburg, the city comes alive with rush-hour traffic. West Germany is one of the world's most heavily urbanized nations; one in three of her citizens lives in a large town or city.

Most notably, this included the building of the 98-kilometre Kiel Canal, a short cut across Schleswig-Holstein that spared ships a 750-kilometre voyage round the northern tip of Denmark to reach the Baltic from the North Sea; construction of the Mittelland ("Middle-land") Canal to provide a 325-kilometre link between the Ruhr and Berlin; and various projects that led to the development of the most important waterway of the European continent—the 1,320-kilometre long Rhine, and its tributaries, the Neckar, Main, Moselle and Ruhr. Then, in the 1930s, Germany built Europe's first motorways which, like the waterways, have been continually improved and extended since World War II.

Today, West Germany's *Autobahnen* constitute the busiest and longest motorway system in Europe, linking all major industrial centres and providing key international routes. This is also one of the fastest road networks in the world because West Germany (the land of Karl Benz who designed and built the first motor car in 1885) has chosen not to have a motorway speed limit. Some Germans drive on the motorways at speeds approaching 200 k.p.h., and the average is about 130 k.p.h.—at which speed motorists can travel the full length of West Germany (853 km) in about 10 hours, and its breadth (225 km at the narrowest point) in roughly two hours. Such enormously increased mobility encourages people to commute greater distances to work, and generally makes the Federal Republic seem a far smaller place.

West Germany is one of the most densely populated lands in the world, with 240 inhabitants per square kilometre, as opposed to 155 inhabitants in the

GDR. Consequently it has very few areas which remain completely untouched by human settlement or activity. To be sure, there are great tracts of forest; the country is almost the same size as Britain, and yet 29 per cent (7.2 million hectares) of its land is forested compared with only 8.5 per cent (1.9 million hectares) in Britain. But even the largest wooded areas—the *Schwarzwald* (the Black Forest) in the south-west, the Bayerischer Forest near the Czechoslovak border, and the Harz Mountains bestriding the east-west frontier—are under the supervision of regiments of foresters and are criss-crossed with clearly defined and well-signposted pathways.

Beyond these forests, Germany as a whole is dotted with thousands of small villages and sprawling urban centres that are separated by ploughed fields and grasslands used mainly for dairy farming. More than 60 per cent of the land is taken up by agriculture. Yet, despite the predominance of forest and farmland, stretches of topographical

monotony are to be found only in the north along the barren, windswept North Sea coast; and in Lower Saxony where flat rye fields and fenced-in grasslands stretch as far as the eye can see and then give way in the east to the Lüneburg Heath, a haunting region of heather-covered moorland punctuated by juniper trees, birch woods, rocks and fields of *Heidschnucken* sheep grazing near timber-framed farmhouses.

Germany can be divided into three main topographical zones that stretch from west to east: the North German Plain (Lowlands), the Central Uplands, and the Alpine Foreland in the south. The Lowlands, a mainly flat region some 160 kilometres wide in the west and much broader in the east, embrace the West German states of Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg and Bremen, most of Lower Saxony, the north-west of North-Rhine Westphalia and about three quarters of East Germany, that is to say virtually all GDR territory north of a line drawn horizontally through the cities of Leipzig and Dresden. The Uplands, a vast area composed largely of high plains and undulating hills and valleys, range across south-west and central West Germany and the southern counties of the GDR. The Alpine Foreland, a wide, gently sloping region roughly bordered by the Danube in the north and the Alps in the south, extends over the south-east of Baden-Württemberg and Upper Bavaria.

Thus, Germany slopes steadily upwards from north to south—from the Lowlands where the land rarely rises above 150 metres, to the Alpine fringe crowned by Germany's highest mountain, the 2,962-metre Zugspitze. As a result, with the notable exception of the Danube, most of the land's rivers and

their tributaries flow northwards and exit into the North Sea or the Baltic.

On the West German side of the Lowlands, commerce and industry thrive around the main ports—the largest being Hamburg on the lower reaches of the Elbe, Bremen near the estuary of the Weser, and Lübeck on the River Trave, 14 kilometres from the Baltic Sea. But elsewhere, this region—so sandy and loamy and exposed to the elements—is ill-suited to support a substantial population. The land lies almost imperceptibly above the sea; indeed, along the North Sea coast, there are no cliffs, only wide expanses of sand, marsh or mud flats.

The division between rural and city dwellers is most pronounced in this part of the Federal Republic. More than six centuries ago, north German towns and German commercial groups abroad founded an association (the Hanseatic League) to promote and safeguard their mutual trading interests. As a result, Hanseatic towns on the Baltic and North Sea developed into great seafaring and trading cities—rich, proud and fiercely independent. Through their links with the outside world, the people of these cities became the most cosmopolitan of Germans. Foreign influence shows most in Hamburg, a great seaport which, despite heavy bombing during World War II, maintains traditionally strong ties with Britain. Some of its suburbs, with their spacious villas and gardens, are strongly reminiscent of wealthy residential areas in the so-called “stockbroker belt”, south of London. Here, people may be seen wearing British-style blazers and flannels, tweeds and tartans, and one may hear citizens complaining of the “English weather”.

Hamburg is now the fourth largest

Silhouetted in the twilight, harbour-side derricks and a television tower dominate the Hamburg skyline. At Germany's busiest port, equipped with the most advanced information technology, ships dock, offload their cargo and depart in a matter of hours.



The German land mass slopes upwards in a southerly direction through the flat lands of the north, the rolling terrain of the central belt and the towering ridges of the Alps. As the altitude rises, the climate changes: winters are often coldest, and summers shortest, in the south.



seaport in Europe, and the most populous West German city excluding isolated West Berlin. Bremen, the Federal Republic's second largest seaport and only other city-state, could never rival Hamburg's importance because the Weser, unlike the Elbe, is not deep enough to take the largest ships. Instead, these ships must dock about 60 kilometres north-west, at Bremerhaven, strategically well placed at the mouth of the Weser, and now a major passenger port and shipbuilding centre as well as West Germany's foremost fishing centre, accounting for some 50 per cent of all landings.

Strongly contrasting with the Lowlands' worldly, sophisticated Hamburgians are the taciturn Frisians—

mainly fishermen, farmers and dairymen living on the islands along the North Sea coast and on the shores of Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein. Over the years, the Frisians have been made the target of endless jokes by other Germans, who mischievously choose to portray them as archetypal country folk unable to come to grips with modern technology. In turn, and more justifiably, the Frisians find much amusement—or rather wonder—in the way so many Germans pay good money every summer to visit North Sea resorts and spend weeks acquiring a wind-driven sun-tan and braving the cold, pounding surf. For centuries these proud and rugged people have lived with the wind and sea as their

enemies. They have toiled to reclaim land for farming, and they have struggled to protect their lands by building dykes and great chains of shifting sand dunes. Yet, time and again, the sea has surged back, destroying their homes, flooding their fields and sometimes permanently changing the map.

The Lowland Plain, on the GDR side, is distinctly different. Here, myriad shallow lakes, great and small, are scattered across a region bounded by the Baltic in the north. There is only one great seaport, Rostock, which, like Bremerhaven in the west, is also an important fishing and shipbuilding centre. Before changes in Germany's boundaries after World War II, this area had no major harbour; it was

served principally by Hamburg and Stettin. Now Hamburg is in West Germany and Stettin is in Poland, and consequently new harbours have been built—besides Rostock, at Warnemünde, Wismar and Stralsund. None, of course, gives the GDR easy access to the North Sea—one of their great losses as a result of the east-west frontier being established just 50 kilometres east of Hamburg.

In the east, unlike the west, the Lowland Plain's largest and most important city is inland: Berlin, the sundered metropolis that began life as a 12th-century fishing village on the banks of the River Spree and emerged some 700 years later as the first capital of a united Germany. The development of Berlin has been truly remarkable considering that it was built in a region of great marshes and on flat, low-lying land that was known as "the sand-box of the Holy Roman Empire". Even now, when foundations are deeply laid, mechanical diggers come up with the purest golden sand. And south-east of the city, in the region of Spreewald, the land is so swampy that outdoor life is lived largely in flat-bottomed boats, and houses and haystacks are built on stilts to keep out the damp.

Although sited 180 kilometres from the sea, Berlin began to prosper in the 17th century because it proved a vital link in the network of overland trade routes that led from more southerly towns like Meissen and Dresden to the Baltic coast, and from Magdeburg in the west to the ancient Polish city of Cracow and the territories of Russia in the east. Now, ironically, the western half of Berlin is absurdly ill-placed in terms of trade. It is a major industrial centre of the Federal Republic, without free and direct access to a hinterland in

HOSTAGES TO THE TIDES



Barely 2 kilometres off the coast of the West German state of Schleswig-Holstein lies a cluster of tiny islands known as *Halligen*, or holms, part of the North Frisian archipelago. The 400 inhabitants earn their livelihoods mainly from tourism and cattle-farming, but their way of life is dominated by the unpredictability of the sea.

Houses, barns and cowsheds are built only on the highest ground, because an island, such as Gröde-Appelland, that is green and tranquil in the summer months (*above*) may be all but swallowed up by the waves during winter floods (*right*). At this season, storms buffet the holms, and the sea level rises.

The descendants of Dutch settlers who migrated to the islands in the Middle Ages have lost half of their territory to the sea in the last 300 years. In recent years, an extensive system of walls and dykes has largely arrested this attrition. But the sea still reigns supreme, and, in the words of an old Frisian motto, "Joy and sorrow come and go like the ebb and flow."





Snow-covered conifers line the banks of the River Ammer in Bavaria. Forests—mostly spruce and pine—cover nearly one third of the Federal Republic. But Germany's sylvan landscapes are now under threat from industrial pollutants falling as acid rain and gradually poisoning the soil.



which to sell its produce; an enclave without its own corridor, the nearest West German point on the *Autobahn* being at Helmstedt, more than 160 kilometres away. In contrast, East Berlin, capital and largest city of the GDR, is ideally placed to be the hub of its country's political and economic life.

The Central Uplands form Germany's largest topographical zone and embrace the most varied landscape: mountains, valleys, forests, farmlands

and great industrial complexes. In the Federal Republic, the zone ranges over the tiny state of Saarland, rich in coal; parts of Lower Saxony and North-Rhine Westphalia; and the state of Rhineland-Palatinate, including the most spectacular stretch of the Rhine (between Koblenz and Bingen) where the tourist discovers that those almost impossibly romantic postcard-pictures of Rhineland castles and islands, villages and gorges do not exaggerate. It

also covers all of the largely agricultural state of Hesse, a rolling patchwork of dark woods alternating with brown and green fields set on hills gently sloping down to picturesque villages and river valleys. This is territory rich in folklore—the land of the brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, those supreme 19th-century reapers of fairy tales, who settled in Berlin and devoted years to compiling the definitive German dictionary, a work so comprehensive and

detailed that neither brother lived to see progress beyond the letter "F".

In eastern Hesse, the Central Uplands rise into the Harz Mountains, a region of grey, pine-clad hills, dramatic gorges and sleepy villages that spans the border with the GDR. Beyond these mountains, in the far south-east of the GDR, the industrial powerhouse of East Germany lies within a triangle formed by the *Bezirke* (counties) of Leipzig, Dresden and Karl-Marx-Stadt. These counties—named like all others after their most important cities—are the three most densely populated in East Germany. Karl-Marx-Stadt heads the list with a population of 1.9 million and a density of 320 inhabitants to the square kilometre. More than 50 per cent of the county's work force is engaged in industry, most notably mechanical engineering, vehicle manufacture and textile production.

West Germany's counterpart—roughly on the same parallel—is the Ruhr district, an area of some 4,000 square kilometres where about 9 per cent of the Federal German population live on only 2 per cent of its territory, so producing a density of about 1,400 inhabitants per square kilometre. Here, at the heart of North-Rhine Westphalia, sprawling industrial cities—Dortmund, Bochum, Essen, Duisburg, Düsseldorf and Cologne—merge almost imperceptibly and embrace a constellation of smaller towns to form a vast urban mass sometimes referred to as *Ruhrstadt* ("Ruhr City").

More commonly, the Ruhr has been known for decades as the *Kohlenpott*, the "coal bowl". In this bowl, a huge concentration of mineshafts, chimney stacks, furnaces and factories, and grimy, multi-storey apartment blocks rise alongside 19th-century miners'

cottages and rows of terraced houses. Yet, somehow, the countryside never seems far distant. Visitors are often surprised to see through the industrial haze and smog a herd of cows ruminating in a field; and the proximity of fields and factories is even more striking in the hilly, wooded area south of the River Ruhr and in the Wupper river valley, where the textile and iron manufacturing of Germany's industrial revolution flourished in 19th-century family workshops, and where Friedrich Engels, friend and collaborator of Karl Marx, worked before he moved to England.

North-Rhine Westphalia is the most industrialized and most populated of *Länder*. Yet the Westphalian part of the state is deeply agricultural. Indeed, because of the state's mixture of industry and farming, the population is said to reflect almost exactly the social make-up of West Germany as a whole, and so it is often the hunting-ground of pollsters and market researchers. To the south, in the neighbouring *Land* of Rhineland-Palatinate, another modern industrial complex runs along the Rhine and Main Rivers, around Frankfurt and the state capital, Mainz. Great chemical factories, petrol refineries and motor car and engineering works make up the backbone of these areas. Here, again, one straggling town merges into another; however, new motorways have encouraged workers to commute from suburban or rural areas rather than live in heavily built-up urban districts, as in the older towns of the Ruhr.

All these great industrial complexes of the western Uplands have, of course, one huge advantage over those in the east: ready access to the Rhine and its tributaries. Rising in the Swiss Alps and flowing to the North Sea, the Rhine is navigable to barges of over 2,000

tonnes as far as Rheinfelden, east of Basle, in the extreme south-west of the Federal Republic. The great barges handle about three quarters of all West Germany's waterways freight, which totals at least 250 million tonnes a year—mainly gravel, sand, timber, fuel oil, coal and iron ores. And Duisburg, port, at its confluence with the Ruhr, has become the world's largest inland port system and the second busiest (after Hamburg) in Germany.

The Rhine divides the *Land* of Rhineland-Palatinate from another highly industrialized state on its south-eastern side. This is Baden-Württemberg, a state boasting many ultra-modern industries, among them the great Mercedes car works and the large electrical and car component factories around the state capital, Stuttgart. It is the fastest growing *Land* of the Federal Republic, and not surprisingly so since this region is the traditional home of the Swabians, a people renowned for their industry and thrift. The Swabians' motto, in dialect, is *Schaffe, schaffe, Häusle baue* ("work hard, work hard, and build a wee house"). They also have another tell-tale saying: *Hund verkaufe, selber belle* ("Sell your dog and do your own barking"). Like their cousins across the Swiss border, the Swabians are shrewd businessmen, but their shrewdness and industry tend to be tempered with a sunny nature and an abiding love of the countryside.

Baden-Württemberg is well geared to combine industry with an appreciation of open-air life. Indeed, it prides itself on being the *Musterlände*, the "model state", because its enormous industrial growth has been achieved without detracting from its beautiful countryside: the vineyards of Baden stretching down to the Rhine, the rocky

Swabian Alb mountains near the Danube, and, most notably, the Black Forest, so named after the dark giant fir trees that set off the emerald green of its lush valleys and the silver of its lakes.

Beyond the Danube, to the south-east, Baden-Württemberg lies within the Alpine Foreland, the southernmost topographical band, which, though bordered by the mighty Zugspitze, is mainly composed of accessible peaks, together with forests, lakes, deep valleys and numerous small villages with brightly painted farmhouses and churches with onion-shaped steeples. The Foreland also embraces the southern half of Bavaria, the largest state of the Federal Republic; and it vies with the Rhineland as the region best known to tourists. Directly north of the Zugspitze lies the village of Oberammergau, famed for its Passion Play, first held in 1634 to give thanks for deliverance from a virulent plague, and now staged in the first year of each new decade. And 15 kilometres west of Oberammergau, perched high on a steep, barely accessible crag, is another great tourist attraction: Castle Neuschwanstein, one of the wildly ornate, fantasy creations of Bavaria's "Mad King" Ludwig II, 19th-century benefactor of Richard Wagner.

Here begins the famous *Romantische Strasse*, the "romantic road", that extends some 350 kilometres north through a wonderland of turreted castles, towering cathedrals and ancient walled towns seemingly unchanged since the Middle Ages. The highway crosses the Danube just north of the 2,000-year-old city of Augsburg, and ends at Würzburg, where a sumptuous Bishop's Palace boasts one of the largest paintings in the world: Tiepolo's

The Four Continents of the Earth, a medley of allegorical figures that covers the 605 square metres of its vaulted ceiling. And east of Würzburg, Bavaria has yet another cluster of ancient towns steeped in romance: Bamberg with its medieval cathedral; Bayreuth, resting place of Wagner and Liszt; and Coburg, with its 16th-century fortress, 15 kilometres from the border with the German Democratic Republic.

Bavaria is not all farming country interspersed with dreamy spires and quaint towns and villages. It has built up a considerable industry, mainly composed of small and medium-sized enterprises. Nuremberg, some 150 kilometres north of the state capital, Munich, has a long-established engineering and toy industry, and its satellite city of Erlangen is the centre of the Siemens electrics trust, West Germany's largest private company. However, Bavaria has the most extensive areas of farmland (3.7 million hectares) in West Germany, and is the most rural, religious and tradition-conscious of *Länder*.

Bavarians, who have close affinities with neighbouring Austria, tend to be earthy, jovial and ruggedly individualistic. Some north Germans would describe them less flatteringly; in the great game of interregional sniping, it is not unusual for the Bavarians to be caricatured as over-indulgent, loud-mouthed pleasure-seekers totally lacking in refinement. But Bavarians do not give a fig for what other Germans think of them. *Mir san mir* ("We are us") they say; in other words, take us as we are. Supremely proud of their origins, they cannot forget that Bavaria was once prosperous and well governed, and they feel themselves just that little bit more separate, that little bit more different, from other Germans.

Bavarian pride is so assertive that visitors may feel they are entering an independent country as they cross over from Hesse or Baden-Württemberg and confront signs in white and blue (the colours of the ancient House of Wittelsbach that ruled from 1180 to 1918) proclaiming the "Free State of Bavaria". The individuality of Bavaria is also exemplified by its own intense form of politics. The conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU), which has long been the principal rival of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) for national leadership, exists in every West German state except Bavaria. The independent Bavarians choose to have their own version of the CDU: the Christian Social Union (CSU) which has been in coalition with its big sister, the CDU, since 1947.

In the 1950s, the CSU began to develop into a major political force under Franz Josef Strauss, an ebullient, energetic and eloquent embodiment of all things Bavarian. Germans outside Bavaria were sometimes shocked by Strauss's more eccentric political ideas, his forceful, highly coloured language, his explosive temperament and habit of shooting verbally from the hip. But Bavarians loved his style. He was their Franz Josef, a true son of Bavaria, putting other Germans in order.

In 1972, the then Federal Chancellor, Willy Brandt, hurled the supreme insult at Strauss when he called him the "last Prussian from Bavaria". Historically, no two German states have detested one another more than Bavaria and Prussia. Today Prussia no longer exists; after World War II, East Prussia was divided and placed separately under Polish and Soviet administration, and the rest of Prussia was distributed among 11 of the 17 *Länder* then

existing within the four zones of occupation. Nevertheless, one may still hear Bavarians using the old, familiar term of abuse: *Saupreissen* ("swinish Prussians"). It is likely to be applied to any grimly sober or rather officious non-Bavarian; indeed, it is sometimes used loosely in reference to anyone living north of their state border.

Although for topographical purposes it is convenient to divide Germany into three west-to-east bands, any extensive tour of the country reveals another, more obvious and fundamental division of the land. In terms of history, culture and temperament, a clear-cut dichotomy exists between the Protestant north and the Catholic south. In the Federal Republic at least, there is still discernible north-south tension: a traditional rivalry that has evolved over the centuries, partly as a result of the Reformation and 16th-century religious wars that left a fragmented Germany even more disunited when each ruler was required under the terms of the 1555 peace settlement at Augsburg to proclaim his state's adherence to one faith or the other.

In the Federal Republic, 85 per cent of the population are now either Protestant or Catholic, and membership of the two churches is roughly equal. Inevitably, in an age of great social mobility it is impossible to draw a line neatly dividing the two religions geographically. Nevertheless, West Germany's Protestants (approximately 26.5 million in 10,648 parishes) are mainly concentrated in the north and east where the austere Lutheran tradition is bound up with a more serious outlook on life and a more progressive attitude to society and politics. The Catholics (approximately 26.7 million in 12,400

parishes) are largely concentrated in the Rhineland and in Bavaria, regions where people tend to have more *joie de vivre* and to be politically conservative.

In East Germany the denominational divide is much less pronounced because the Protestants (more than 7.7 million) far outnumber the Catholics (some 1.2 million), and neither church has its members concentrated in any particular area. In the 1960s, church-going declined as the GDR's avowedly atheistic regime actively sought to undermine the authority and influence of the church. Pastors were harassed, student Christian groups were outlawed by university authorities; church literature was burned; and the state introduced secular ceremonies to replace baptism and religious confirmation. But religious oppression had one good effect: it served to draw Prot-

estants and Catholics closer together and to foster a new spirit of co-operation and ecumenism. In time, the regime recognized that the church could be of positive value to the state, not only by virtue of its work with the sick and handicapped, but also as a moderating force that helped to defuse extreme dissidence and promote social stability. In 1976, religious belief was officially recognized as every East German's right.

In West Germany, the authority and influence of both Christian churches are relatively strong in the educational system, in cultural activities, and in local and regional politics. This strength may be largely explained by the fact that there is no radical separation of church and state. West German Basic Law is unusual in granting the churches their traditional legal status,



On their way to school for the first time, three East German children hide apprehensive smiles behind "Schultüten"—cardboard cones with sweets, toys, pencils and rulers. For Germans east and west, these gifts make the first day less daunting.

and, among other privileges, this status gives the churches the right to tax their members. Indeed, this tax—9 per cent of a person's income tax—is collected by the state on behalf of the churches.

Church tax (*Kirchensteuer*) is compulsory for all nominal church members. Any citizen may gain exemption by formally renouncing religious affiliation. Traditionally, however, this has been regarded as a drastic course of action—and one liable, in a close-knit community, to carry some social stigma. The majority of West Germans retain their membership, if not out of deep religiosity, then because they want to retain access to church facilities for rites of passage. It is also recognized that the tax system enables the churches to undertake tasks in the public interest that might otherwise be neglected: for example, the running of church kindergartens, youth clubs and

nursing homes, and the maintenance of many historic monuments that belong to the churches. Furthermore, the churches of West Germany have given large sums of financial aid to their counterparts in the GDR.

But times are changing fast. Church-going in the Federal Republic has declined so dramatically that now only an estimated one third of all Catholics and less than 10 per cent of all Protestants are regular churchgoers. Since the mid-1960s, the number of West Germans relinquishing church membership has risen steeply to reach a level of more than 180,000 a year in the early 1980s. This is recognized as an indication of increased support for the view that much of the churches' public welfare work should not be dependent on church tax but should be the financial responsibility of the nationwide social security network to which the federal

government allocates more than one third of all public expenditure.

It is a further measure of declining church influence that West Germany, despite its large Catholic population, has one of the lowest birth rates in the world: a mere 10.1 births per 1,000 of the population. After the introduction of the *Pille* in the 1960s, the number of births plunged from over a million a year to 576,000 in 1978; and surprisingly this fall was most marked in rural, predominantly Catholic areas like the Saar and Rhineland-Palatinate. Since then, the birth rate has increased only fractionally, and that increase would be non-existent if it were not for the presence of so many *Gastarbeiter*.

Ever since 1972, the number of deaths each year has consistently exceeded the number of births and so, in a sense, West Germany may be called a "dying country". The average number of children per marriage is now only 1.3, whereas an average of 2.2 would be necessary to maintain the population at its present level of 61 million. Various factors have contributed to this decline: increasing use of the pill, greater availability of abortion (legalized in 1974), and doubts about bringing children into an Armageddon-threatened and over-populated world. (This latter attitude is reflected by the rising number of applicants seeking to adopt children from the Third World.)

Above all, however, the trend can be explained in terms of the material disadvantages of parenthood. In West Germany—where women now make up about a third of the work force—a pregnant employee is entitled to 14 weeks' paid maternity leave; a further four months' leave, if required, with benefits up to DM 750 a month; and monthly child allowances of DM 50 for



Brightly coloured bedding airs in the window of a shingled farmhouse in the Allgäu region of the German Alps. Surrounded by winter fuel, the house is designed for warmth. Allgäu houses traditionally have a low-pitched roof to cover family quarters on the upper storeys, and fodder and livestock below.

The black-and-white patterns of timbered houses stand out vividly against a hillside in the Rhineland town of Freudenberg. West Germany has more than one million timber-framed buildings, and strict planning regulations ensure that new construction conforms to local styles.

the first child, DM 120 for the second, and DM 240 for each subsequent child. Nevertheless, case histories show that a couple with average earnings will, after the birth of their first child, experience a fall in their standard of living.

Housing, too, may become a problem. Statistically, West Germany's housing shortage ended in 1974 when, for the first time, the number of dwellings (23.2 million) exceeded the number of family groups (23.1 million). But, in reality, the housing market is much more complex. House prices have remained extremely high and are usually far beyond the means of young couples, who are required by most building societies to save a 40 per cent deposit to secure a mortgage. Renting is the alternative, and here couples with children can be at a disadvantage. Many apartment owners tend to choose as tenants single people or childless couples who are regarded as less likely to be noisy or untidy. The tendency was forcefully condemned by Helmut Schmidt during his Chancellorship. "I find it deplorable," he said, "that a couple with a dog has less difficulty renting a flat than a couple with children."

But West Germany's low birth rate cannot be explained merely in terms of couples unable to afford the luxury of children. There are also countless thousands of well-to-do couples who prefer to remain childless rather than sacrifice the freedom and comfort of their cherished lifestyle. One couple whose attitude epitomizes this trend are Claudia Schultz and Karl Fischer of Bremen. (Incidentally, these are not their real names. It is the most telling commentary on the fundamental difference between the two Germanys that some East Germans interviewed for this book requested anonymity for



fear of inviting the disfavour of Communist Party officials, while some West Germans—as here—requested anonymity because they did not want other people to learn details of their personal income and capital.)

Claudia, a vivacious 35-year-old, chief sales representative for a company manufacturing industrial cleaning agents, confided that she earned DM 40,000 a year, ran a company car, and was the joint-owner of a well-appointed, two-bedroomed detached house which she had bought four years ago in conjunction with her boyfriend, Karl, a DM 62,000-a-year shipping broker. "The house was an absolute bargain," said Karl. "It cost DM 175,000 and now it's worth perhaps twice as much. Our repayments are spread over 25 years, but we hope to pay off the mortgage much sooner."

Claudia and Karl have lived to-

gether for 11 years. They do not plan to have children, and so they see no purpose in getting married. "Marriage," said Claudia, "could not make us any happier than we are." Certainly, they enjoy a rich and varied life, devoting most of their leisure time to sport or travel. Together they have taken holidays in the United States (driving from New York to San Francisco on a six-week vacation), to the Greek Islands, Portugal, Italy (summer and winter), England, Holland, Spain and Tunisia. Next they plan to drive from New York to Florida.

In addition, both have visited friends and relatives in East Germany. Indeed, Claudia visits the GDR every year in the first week of May, acting as chauffeur to her mother who insists on an annual visit to friends in Dresden who helped her flee to the west, via Berlin, in 1952. She stresses that these visits have made her more deeply

appreciative of her good fortune. "If we lived in East Germany, we would never have our own house, we would never have holidays outside the Soviet bloc, and we might still be waiting to get our first car." She could see a few minor benefits from living in the GDR, but if she was to qualify, she would need to abandon her plan not to have children.

Significantly, few countries in the world can rival East Germany in providing incentives for marriage and parenthood. In the GDR, all newly-weds under 26 are entitled to an interest-free loan of 5,000 marks to help them furnish their apartment. This loan should be repaid within eight years. But repayments are progressively waived as children are born and, after the third child, repayment is cancelled completely. Always the benefits are designed to encourage "large families", which are officially defined as couples with four or more children or single parents with three or more children. There is a benefit of 100 marks a month for the third child and every subsequent child. Furthermore, large families are given top priority on the long waiting lists for adequate housing—a compelling reason to go out and multiply in a country where all apartments are distributed by town and community councils and where, on average, a couple without children have one room of no more than 40 square metres.

Under the social security system of the GDR—where women account for almost 50 per cent of the work force—employed mothers-to-be qualify for 26 weeks' maternity leave on full pay. For each subsequent child, women are entitled to a "baby year" which, if they choose, allows them to stay at home on paid leave, caring for the child until the first birthday. More pointedly, East

On the outskirts of West Berlin, motorways form an intricate web of junctions and flyovers. German motorway construction began in the 1930s; today, the Federal Republic has Europe's most extensive network of major motorways covering more than 7,000 kilometres.

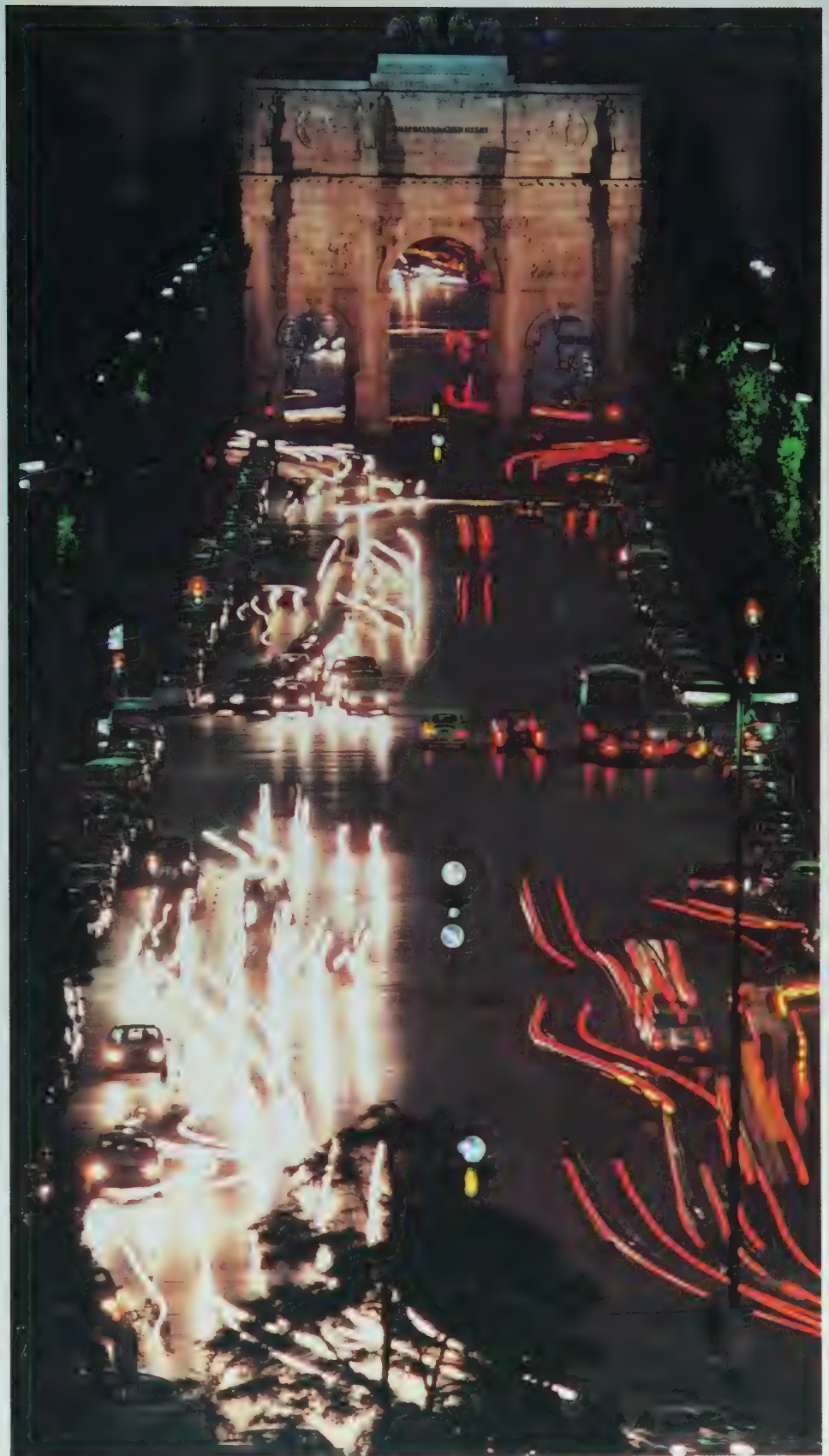


Germany surpasses West Germany in providing facilities for the children of working mothers. In the GDR, over 60 per cent of infants under three are left in crèches operated by the state, and more than 90 per cent of children from three to six years old have places in state-run kindergartens. These are vital facilities in a country which can fully utilize its potential work force.

According to government statistics, 87 per cent of East German women of working age from 16 to 60 have a job outside the home. This is as it should be in a country whose Constitution states that it is the duty as well as the right of every citizen to work. Of course, this high percentage is not unconnected with the fact that wages are relatively low and that the attainment of a comfortable standard of living depends on the earning power of both the male and female partner. Nevertheless, it is not to be denied that the GDR is managing to perform an extraordinary double-act: maintaining a huge female work force while encouraging its citizens to boost the population.

Until 1973, the GDR birth rate—like that of the Federal Republic—was steadily falling. Since then, however, it has steadily risen—from 10.6 to 14.2 births per 1,000 inhabitants every year—while the annual death rate has averaged 13.9 deaths per 1,000 inhabitants. Thus, unlike West Germany, the GDR is now maintaining a fairly static population level, with births almost equalling the total number of citizens lost each year by death and by legal or illegal departure to the west. At the same time, however, as the result of a rigidly state-controlled socio-economic system, it is undeniably developing into a Germany that is far less rich in variety and contrasts.

In the heart of Munich, the floodlit façade of the 19th-century Siegestor (Victory Arch) dominates the Leopoldstrasse. Every year Munich draws millions of tourists, making it the fourth most-visited city in Europe, after London, Paris and Rome.



THE SPIRIT OF BERLIN

Berlin is Europe's most extraordinary city. Divided by a 4.5-metre-high concrete wall, it encompasses within its 886 square kilometres two diametrically opposed political systems. East Berlin, capital of the GDR and 1.1 million people strong, is one of the most prosperous socialist metropolises in the world. West Berlin, with 1.9 million inhabitants, is the largest West German city, yet it lies 170 kilometres inside East Germany, surviving as an isolated city-state with its own forests, lakes and farmland—all enclosed within the fortified perimeter of the Berlin Wall.

East and West, Berliners have always prided themselves on being different from other Germans. They have their own dialect, their own sardonic humour, and their own indomitable spirit, which has sustained them through war, dictatorship and foreign occupation. Berliners consider themselves more cultured, progressive and cosmopolitan than their compatriots—perhaps because their city has always been an international crossroads, a magnet for creative, rebellious spirits, drawn here by the highly charged atmosphere that Berliners themselves call the *Berliner Luft*, the heady Berlin air.

As a legacy of World War II, Berlin is divided into four parts. In 1945, each of the victorious allies took control of one section of the city. The western part of the city comprises the French, British and American sectors; East Berlin is the Soviet zone.



Decorated with whimsical paintings and graffiti, a section of the Berlin Wall provides the backdrop for a children's ball game in West Berlin. The Wall cuts resolutely across city streets and suburban gardens as well as rural fields and forests.



Watched by his foreman, a workman repairs sewage pipes in West Berlin's Charlottenburg district. Most of the west's sewage is piped to treatment plants in East Berlin and the surrounding countryside. Municipal rubbish, too, is transported through a gate in the wall to dumps in the east.



Poised on top of a brick chimney in East Berlin, a sweep hauls up his weighted cleaning brush, releasing a cloud of dust from the flue. The top hat, badge of his trade, proclaims his status as a journeyman in the chimney sweeps' guild. Sweeps are a familiar sight on both sides of the city.



In a West Berlin street, a delivery man (*below*) steadies a consignment of coal briquets. The fragile blocks of pressed coal, widely used in the open fires and ovens that still heat many Berlin homes, are liable to disintegrate unless packed individually in wooden racks.



A WORKING DAY IN THE CITY



A fisherman from the East Berlin Fishing Co-operative unloads a catch on Grosser Müggelsee, one of the 13 lakes in the environs of East Berlin. The city incorporates 182 kilometres of waterways, providing abundant pike, perch and whitefish, and the eels that are prized as a local delicacy.

In a field fringed by suburban tower blocks, just outside the city centre, a West Berlin farmer harvests his wheat. Over 100 farms, occupying 7.5 per cent of West Berlin's total land area, grow enough wheat and barley to meet the city's needs.





Rectangles of high-rise housing, sharply outlined against the sky, are a familiar sight on both sides of the city. Blocks such as these West Berlin towers are gradually replacing the 60 per cent of Berlin's housing destroyed during World War II, but there is still a serious housing shortage, east and west.

A young squatter gazes from the window of his temporary home in Kreuzberg, West Berlin's most densely populated district. Because housing developers find it cheaper to build new units than renovate existing blocks, some 7,000 flats in the west stand empty or are occupied by squatters.



TOWER BLOCKS AND TENEMENTS

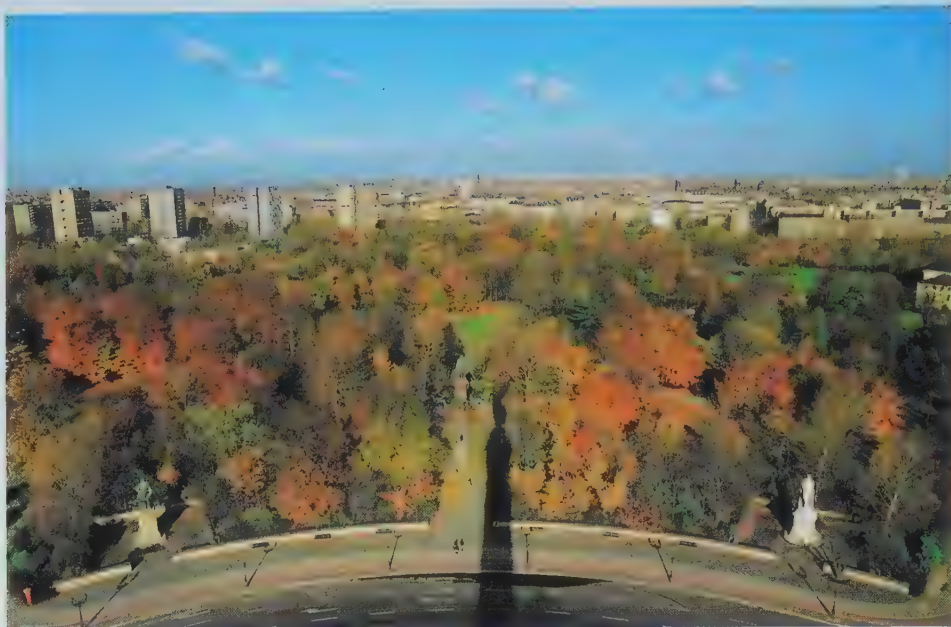


An elderly East Berliner sits on her doorstep in Prenzlauer Berg, an inner-city borough whose 19th-century tenement buildings were heavily damaged in wartime bombings. In this district alone, the state renovates 500 flats a year, but—as in the west—many thousands of homes are unmodernized.

In the centre of East Berlin, a gigantic statue of Lenin guards the entrance to a modern high-rise block of flats. The authorities allocate accommodation according to the greatest need, giving priority to families with children.

ENJOYING THE OPEN SPACES

The shadow of the Winged Victory monument falls across West Berlin's Tiergarten. Once an 18th-century deer reserve, this magnificent park was replanted after wartime bombing.



Replete after their feast, picnickers loll under trees on the banks of the Grosser Müggelsee. Extensive woodlands and spacious municipal campsites make it possible for East Berliners to enjoy a holiday in the countryside without leaving the city.





Scantily clad or completely nude, sunbathers crowd a park near the centre of West Berlin. Even in their own densely populated city, Berliners happily tolerate nudism—a movement that started in Germany in the early years of the century.

Honouring an old custom, East Berlin newlyweds set off for their reception in a horse-drawn carriage with a top-hatted driver. Despite their traditional dress, the couple were married in the city hall. Notwithstanding the official atheism of the GDR, more and more people have a church wedding.



A llama from West Berlin's zoo inspects a passer-by's donation to an animal-welfare charity. The zoo—one of the largest of its kind in Europe—frequently lends out exotic animals to help raise funds for worthy causes.

Passers-by on the Kurfürstendamm pause to watch actors posing as marble statues at the beginning of a skit. Street entertainers of all kinds—buskers, snake charmers, mime artists and clowns—have turned this West Berlin boulevard into an outdoor theatre.



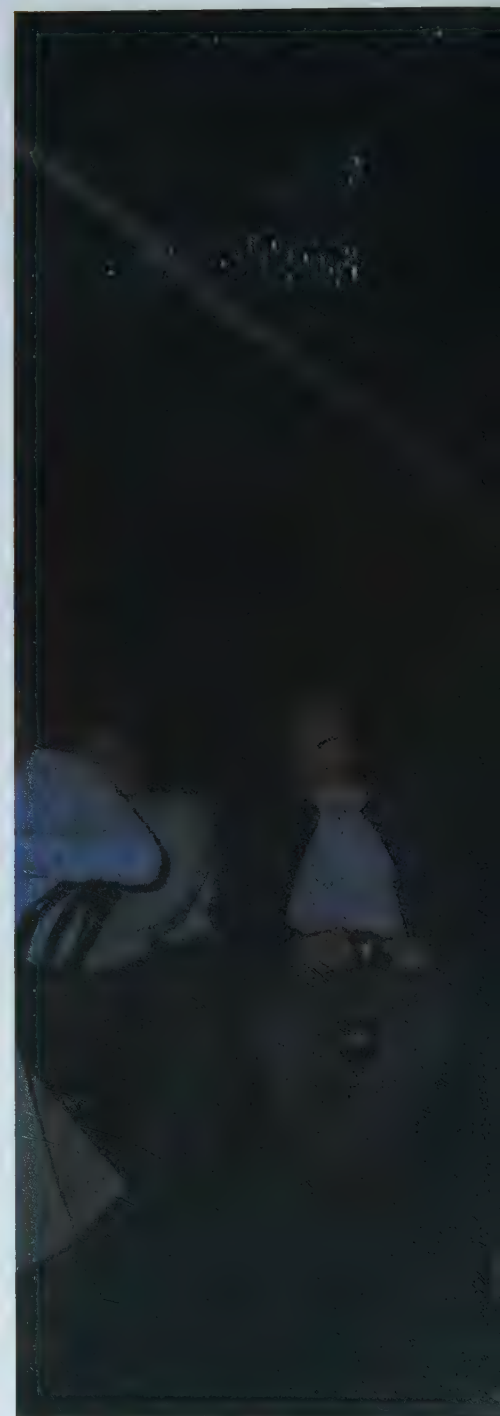
THE THEATRE OF THE STREETS



A posse of West Berlin cowboys, representing the Old Texas Cowboy Club, attract only mild attention from café patrons. Members of the club, one of many West German fraternities, don costumes to raise money for charity.



In the ornate surroundings of the Café Haus Q'Dam, Berliners enjoy a leisurely chat. For patrons of such traditional establishments, rich cakes, accompanied by coffee or a Berliner *Weisse mit Schüss*—white beer injected with a dash of raspberry syrup—is a much-loved daily ritual.



Youthful patrons crowd the bar of the Café Abax. Since the 1960s, West Berlin has witnessed a steady influx of young people, drawn by the city's vibrant cultural and social life.

THE VIBRANT LIFE: FROM CAFÉ TO CABARET



A chorus line of transvestite dancers performs in a West Berlin nightclub. Such cabarets have been a Berlin trademark since the 1920s, giving the city its lasting reputation for decadence, daring, and an easy tolerance of alternative lifestyles.

3



Rich merchants and a busy harbour represent prosperity in an illustration from Hamburg's Municipal Code of 1497. As members of a powerful consortium, the Hanseatic League, German ports enjoyed a virtual monopoly over North Sea and Baltic trade in the 15th and 16th centuries.

CENTURIES OF CONFLICT

"This country is open to all the winds of the continent," said André François-Poncet, French ambassador to Germany before and after World War II. And therein lies one of the keys to Germany's turbulent history of wars, upheavals, and centuries of disunity. It stands at the crossroads of Europe, traversed by the great, predominantly flat, North German Plain. Only the sea to the north and the Alps to the south provide natural frontiers, and the country's seven major rivers—the Rhine, Ems, Weser, Elbe, Main, Oder and Danube—have served more as aids than obstacles to the free movement of man. Such a land was destined from the beginning to attract nomads, colonists and invaders.

Archaeological evidence has been able to establish that German territory was inhabited at least 50,000 years ago by Neanderthals, sturdy predecessors of modern humans. Neanderthals are named after a cavernous, limestone ravine in the Neander Valley near Düsseldorf, where the first fossil remains of this forebear were found in 1856. Many additional Neanderthal skeletons were to be found later in Europe, Africa and Asia, and the original skull is now a prized exhibit in the Rhineland Museum in Bonn.

At the time of that first discovery, diggings at Hallstatt, in upper Austria, were revealing a wealth of information about Celtic tribes who had inhabited much of the central European plain, from present-day Hungary to Brittany, in the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age about 3,000 years ago. There,

in a prehistoric cemetery and salt mine, excavations unearthed evidence of a civilization incredibly rich in works of art. Between 1846 and 1899, more than 2,000 graves were uncovered. Because of the preservative nature of salt, the bodies of Celtic miners had remained intact—together with an astonishing array of decorated bronze shields, helmets and drinking vessels, iron swords, gold jewellery and finely made pottery.

Between the end of the Bronze Age and the second century B.C., these Celtic peoples were gradually displaced by Teutonic, or Germanic, tribes migrating into the German plain from the north and the east. The invaders made their first appearance in written history in 113 B.C. when two of the tribes, the Cimbri and the Teutones, defeated a Roman army near Noreia in Carinthia, in the Eastern Alps. In turn, however, they were later annihilated by a great punitive force commanded by the renowned Roman general Marius.

In 58 B.C. Gaius Julius Caesar launched his conquest of Gaul, and in three years he had subjugated those Germanic people who had settled on Gallic territory west of the Rhine. Roman legions later marched north along the Rhine and colonized the area that now makes up the western *Länder* of the Federal Republic. But when the Romans sought to expand their Empire eastwards, from the Rhine to the Elbe, they suffered a terrible defeat by Germanic forces led by Hermann, a chieftain of the Cherusci tribe.

Hermann (more commonly known by his Latin name, Arminius) had been

taken to Rome in his youth, probably as a hostage, and there he had studied Latin and Roman military history. How diligently he studied was evident in 9 A.D. when he was the leader of an uprising which vanquished three Roman legions (about 20,000 men) in the hilly region of the Teutoburg Forest, south of modern-day Bielefeld. Centuries later, he came to be recognized as the first German national hero, and he is now commemorated by a colossal monument situated high on a mountain near Detmold, not far from the ruins of an old Germanic fort.

The Romans, accustomed to doing battle on open ground and in well-ordered formations, were much less formidable in dense forests, fighting enemies adept at hand-to-hand combat. Therefore, after brief retaliatory campaigns, they chose to limit their colonization to the open lands along the Rhine and the Danube. Between the headwaters of the two rivers they built defences, some 550 kilometres long, to secure their territory against incursions from the east.

At the end of the first century A.D., the Roman consul and historian Tacitus wrote the first extensive account of the fierce, independent peoples who lived beyond the frontier and who were known in Latin as the *Germani* (possibly from a Celtic word meaning "the shouters"). His "Treatise on the Situation, Manners and People of Germania"—though tinged with the prejudice of a colonist—is indispensable as an anthropological report on the Germans at the dawn of their history. He recorded

that they comprised many different tribes, some of them sedentary and some nomadic. They were a proud, frank and generous people, though he judged that their intrepid warriors became listless sluggards in time of peace, or else they sought out other tribes who had some war in hand they could join. "For the Germans have no taste for peace; renown is more easily won among perils, and a large body of retainers cannot be kept together except by means of violence and war."

When the German warriors marched into battle, they shouted a blood-curdling war-chant, and they moved in groups of families and clans, with their women and children close behind "so they can hear the shrieks of their women-folk and the wailing of their children". They wanted to perform deeds of valour for the women, for it was they who would later "count

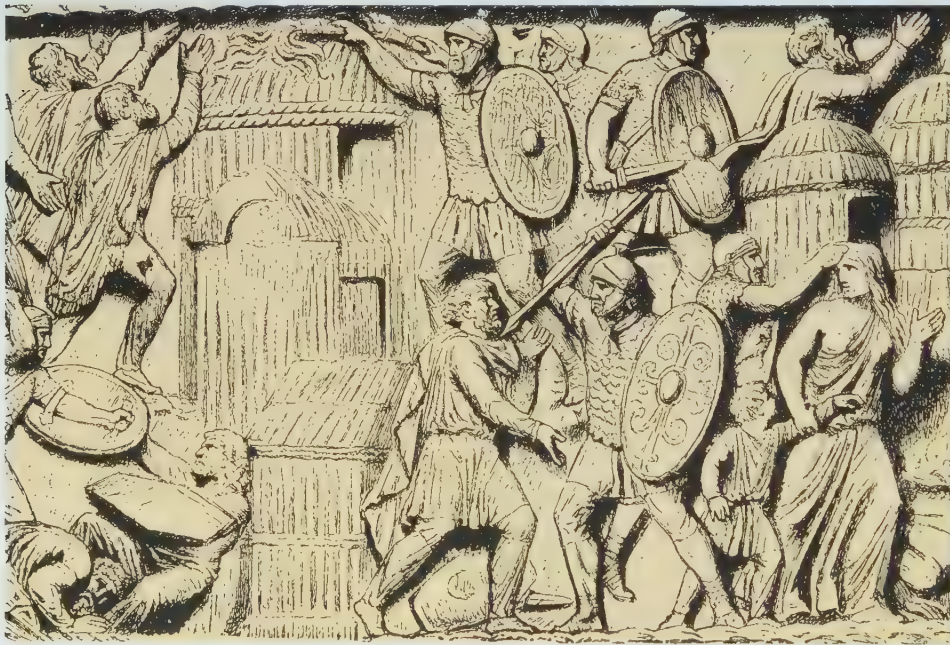
and compare the gashes". Moreover, he observed, some German armies had been "rallied by the women, pleading heroically with their men, thrusting forward their bared bosoms, and making them realize the imminent prospect of enslavement—a fate which the Germans fear more desperately for their women than for themselves."

Tacitus judged that the Germans, for all their pagan superstition and warrior tradition, were a remarkably law-abiding people; above all, he praised their respect for marriage as a strict and sacred institution. Only virgins could marry, and widows, no matter how young and beautiful, were forbidden to take a second husband. Adultery was extremely rare, but then with good reason. When detected, the punishment was instant, and inflicted by the husband. "He cuts off her hair, strips her naked, and in the presence of

kinsmen turns her out of his house and flogs her all through the village. They have in fact no mercy for a wife who prostitutes her chastity. Neither beauty, youth, or wealth can find her a husband." No one in Germany, Tacitus stressed in his treatise, found vice an amusing subject—a far cry from the mores of ancient Rome.

For the greater part of the first and second centuries A.D., the Romans maintained peaceful relations with the German peoples; and they established a number of important towns, most notably, Augsburg, Bonn, Cologne and Trier. But then the numerous Germanic tribes began to regroup and larger, more powerful tribes emerged, among them the Alemanni, Burgundians, Franks, Frisii, Goths, Lombards, Saxons, Suevi and Vandals. The Romans, with their overstretched lines of communication, had more and more difficulty in keeping these formidable tribes at bay. Finally, during the fourth and fifth centuries, the frontier defences gave way. The Goths, Burgundians, Franks, Vandals and other tribes poured across the Rhine River, along with some relative newcomers—the ferocious Huns, who had stormed across Germany from Asia.

Attila and his Huns inspired fear throughout Europe. But after Attila's death in 453, his many sons fought among themselves and consequently the great empire of the Huns disintegrated, its survivors fleeing back east, beyond the Volga. Of the many tribes that remained in Germany, the Franks were by far the most powerful. King Clovis, the first great Frankish leader, who reigned from 481 to 511, made Paris his capital and established the Merovingian dynasty, which ruled for two and a half centuries over a feudal



A modern sketch of a first-century relief details a village plundered by Roman soldiers. The Romans never totally subjugated the Germans, and their historian Tacitus confessed: "Neither by the Samnites nor by the Carthaginians, not by Spain nor Gaul, have we had more lessons taught us."

kingdom consisting of virtually all of France, the Low Countries and western and southern Germany.

In the eighth century, the Merovingians were supplanted by the Carolingian dynasty, so named by modern historians after its most celebrated son, Charlemagne (Carolus Magnus), or “Karl der Grosse” as he is known to German history. Charlemagne, King of the Franks from 768 to 814, extended his empire over most of Western Europe and eventually established his court in the German town of Aachen, just west of Cologne, where his bones rest to this day. Statesman, lawgiver and military strategist, he was dubbed *rex pater Europae*—King father of Europe—by a poet at his court. Equally, he may be regarded as the father of Germany. He was responsible, by way of long, savagely waged wars, for the conquest and conversion to Christianity of the pagan Saxons; and, during his reign, the great German tribes—Alemanni, Bavarians, Saxons and Thuringians—were gathered for the first time into one political unit.

In Rome, on Christmas Day, 800, Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne “Roman Emperor”—Christian ruler of an empire comprising present-day West Germany, Austria, western Czechoslovakia, northern Italy, Switzerland, France and the Low Countries. Some 40 years later, following the death of Louis the Pious, Charlemagne’s last surviving son, this empire was divided between three heirs. It became three separate kingdoms arranged along a north–south axis, and so the precious heritage of a united Europe was lost. Nonetheless, rulers of the emerging German kingdom in the east continued to see themselves as the sole heirs to Charlemagne, and in the

10th century they revived the custom of going to Rome to receive the imperial crown from the Pope’s hand. The tradition was to lead to the complex, far-reaching concept of the “Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation”, and to the grand imperial illusion that the German emperors had inherited both the power of the Caesars and the glory of the universal Church, and were therefore the feudal overlords of other

kings and princes, deriving their authority from God.

These “Roman emperors” ruled over an empire, or *Reich*, that consisted of only Germany and northern Italy; despite their title they exercised no power over Rome itself. Even within Germany the emperor’s authority was often disregarded by his vassals; here, he was only the head of a loose confederation of feudal princes. Yet the Ger-



In an illumination from a 14th-century manuscript, Charlemagne, Emperor of the western Roman Empire from 800 to 814, receives his crown. A militant defender of the faith, Charlemagne brought the last of Germany’s pagan tribes into the Christian fold.

man lords continued to regard the Holy Roman emperor as their legitimizing authority for any honours and distinctions; the emperor invested princes with their principalities, issued the letters patent that could grant a city its “freedom” or a soldier his knighthood, and so directly contributed to the fragmentation of Germany.

In the mid-12th century, the empire came under the brilliant rule of Frederick I, surnamed Barbarossa on account of his fiery beard. Barbarossa was the foremost of the Hohenstaufen emperors and the model medieval ruler: “A magnificent, magnanimous man,” as Thomas Carlyle described him, “holding the reins of the world, not quite in the imaginary sense; scourging anarchy down, and urging noble effort up, really on a grand scale.” In his 38-year reign, he encouraged the growth of towns, the development of Bremen, Hamburg and Lübeck as important maritime trading centres, and the extension of German power over the former Slavonic territories to the east. He raised Austria to the status of a duchy (previously it had been ruled by a mere margrave) and asserted his imperial authority over Bohemia, Poland and Hungary.

In Italy, however, Barbarossa became embroiled in a long and bloody series of campaigns against the papal power of Rome; and at home he struggled in vain to curb the ever-increasing power of rival German princes. Whereas France, during his lifetime, developed into a centralized monarchical state, Germany became more deeply entrenched in a system of independent territorial states. Centuries later, German romantics would glorify Barbarossa as a symbol of national unity, but, in truth, after his death the consoli-

dation of a single German nation-state was more remote than ever.

Barbarossa died in 1190, accidentally drowned in a Turkish river while on one of the Crusades. His body was never recovered, and this gave rise to the legend that he lived in a cavern deep in the Kyffhäuser mountain in Thuringia, awaiting the moment when his country would recall him to the throne. Actually, the Hohenstaufen emperors were to lose their hold on Germany in trying to become the masters of Italy. After the last of their dynasty was beheaded in 1254, Germany was racked by two decades of chaos and civil war. The Holy Roman Empire of the German nation had become a legal fiction.

Meanwhile, the Middle Ages had produced a magnificent body of literature in the two forms of the language that are called Old High German and Middle High German. The lords and ladies of the German courts were spell-bound by brilliant poets like Wolfram von Eschenbach, author of the 25,000-line epic of *Parzival*—the “guileless fool” who embarks on the quest for the Holy Grail and eventually acquires wisdom. Another supremely poetic picture of German court life was provided by Gottfried von Strassburg’s *Tristan und Isolde*, an uncompleted epic of nearly 20,000 lines that was to become one of the enduring love stories of world literature.

But the courtly tradition that sustained this burst of literary creativity was already on the wane when the great Hohenstaufen dynasty came to an end. During this period of decline and disintegration, there was open warfare between the great feudal princes, and local lords often became robber barons. It was the merchants and craftsmen of the emerging cities—the

burghers of the walled towns—whose fortunes rose at the same time that the nobles fell into disarray. They managed to establish great trade associations, of which the Hanseatic League was by far the most powerful—a union of maritime and inland cities for the purpose of encouraging trade, safeguarding trade routes on sea or land, and regulating the conditions of commerce among merchants in various corners of Europe. The League’s activities centred on Lübeck and the Baltic, but extended as far as Russia, Scandinavia, England and Spain.

As trade increased, Germany entered a period of economic growth, but it was a prosperity in which the overwhelming majority of German people had no share. By 1500, Germany was still a predominantly rural society. There were only 15 cities with a population of 10,000 or more inhabitants, the largest being Augsburg with some 50,000. Of an estimated population of 12 million, approximately 10.5 million lived off the land. The peasants were presented with higher taxes and reduced rights, and their sole legal recourse was to the manorial court, where their grievances were almost always dismissed or ignored.

Beyond the safety of the well-ordered towns, the prevailing pattern was one of continuous strife and civil disorder. Germany was divided into more than 300 separate duchies, principalities, countships, bishoprics and self-governing cities, all of them disposed to use armed incursions by bands of mercenaries as a means of settling their local disputes.

The Habsburgs of Austria now held the imperial crown more or less as a family monopoly. Yet they found they were unable to impose their authority

Though the emperor still retained great prestige, in practice he now ruled only Austria, Bohemia and Hungary—a complex of polyglot kingdoms whose interests diverged increasingly from those of such German states as Bavaria, Saxony and Brandenburg. Henceforth, Austrian history was to develop along distinctly separate lines from those of its western and northern neighbours. Meanwhile, the latter had only their language in common—and even this presented difficulties: dialects varied so much from region to region that the Low Germans of the “watercoast” had trouble understanding the Swabians, and the Rhinelanders were bemused by the German as spoken by Saxons or Brandenburgers.



This political confusion was further compounded by the Protestant Reformation. When the strong-willed monk and theologian Martin Luther challenged the authority of the Pope in 1517 by tacking his 95 theses to the church door in Wittenberg, Saxony, he began a process that was to end in the division of the whole of Germany into two warring camps, Catholic and Protestant. On the face of it, the Reformation was concerned with theological issues, but the movement also had a social and economic dimension. The prosperous trading cities and commercial states of northern Germany were the most

A portrait of a man with a long white beard and a fur hat, wearing a dark robe with a light-colored tunic underneath. He is holding a small object in his hands.

[illegible][illegible]

In 1455, after seven years' work, Gutenberg produced his first printed book—a bible (*sample page, left*) in an edition of 200 copies. By this time, he was hopelessly in debt and his principal creditor took over the press and established the first firm of printers and publishers.

Unterscheid zwischender wahren Religion Christi vnd falschen Abgöttischen Lehr des Antichrist



In a woodcut entitled *The Difference between the True Religion of Christ and the False Ungodliness of the Antichrist*, the Protestant artist Lukas Cranach the Elder (1472–1553) contrasts Luther's reformed Christianity with the corruption rampant in the Church of Rome. On the left,

Protestants worship the God of love and listen to Luther preaching; on the other side, the God of wrath sends down fire and brimstone on a blighted land where clerics sell pardons to sinners and pervert the Sacraments, and a demon in a bishop's mitre sits on the shoulder of a leering priest.

is in den fürnemsten stücken.



receptive to the new teachings and most eager to rebel against pope and emperor. In Saxony and Hesse, the struggle between the old faith and the new thus concealed a contest between the traditional feudal order and the emerging middle classes.

The down-trodden peasants also responded to the spirit of the times and began to resist attempts by the feudal lords to exploit them still further. In 1524, the Peasants' Revolt erupted in the Black Forest and spread the following year through southern Germany (excluding Bavaria), Hesse, Thuringia, Saxony and Tirol. The peasants adopted as their battle-cry Luther's plea for "liberty of Christian men", but they only aroused Luther's wrath when their rampaging included the destruction of ecclesiastical establishments. In the absence of any real leadership or strategy, the peasants suffered appalling loss of life inflicted by the armies of territorial princes, and those who survived were taxed more heavily than ever by way of reparation.

Bavaria, the Catholic bastion in the south, at first played only a marginal role in the doctrinal conflict inspired by Luther. When Duke Albrecht V came to the throne of Bavaria in 1550, he pursued a policy of cautious neutrality in the ongoing wars between the Catholic Habsburgs and the league of Protestant princes headed by the ruler of Saxony. His ministers rightly suspected him of being lukewarm in matters of religion: clearly his real passion was reserved for music, art and all the sundry pleasures of court life. He ran up vast debts in order to build private museums such as the *Antiquarium* and *Kunstammer*, which he stocked with Roman antiquities and Italian Renaissance paintings and sculptures,

bought for him by his agents in Rome, Venice and Mantua. His patronage of the arts was so great that it might have sparked a literary and artistic renaissance in Germany comparable to the humanist revival that had taken place elsewhere in Europe, producing such figures as Shakespeare, Tasso and Montaigne. But the incipient German renaissance was nipped in the bud by the increasing violence and intolerance demonstrated by Catholics and Protestants in the great religious divide.

In the latter part of his reign, Albrecht himself abandoned his policy of toleration toward dissenters. All those who persisted in the Lutheran heresy would henceforth be banished from the duchy, though it meant losing many of the most prosperous craftsmen and merchants of Munich, who promptly migrated to Protestant cities further north. When the Munich city council complained that this exodus was costing them 100,000 florins a year in lost taxes, Albrecht replied that his subjects' spiritual salvation mattered more than money, and that he could not tolerate heretics in his own capital. Thus the stage was set for yet another painful confrontation in the steadily widening rift between formerly peaceful neighbours.

Similar outbreaks of bigotry were taking place throughout central Europe. By 1618 these tensions and provocations erupted into one of the most violent and destructive of all European conflicts, the Thirty Years War. It began as a Bohemian Protestant revolt against Roman Catholic rule, and eventually spread to involve most of the countries of Western Europe. During the next three decades Germany was turned into a killing-ground where plundering armies, led

by generals interested only in self-aggrandizement, terrorized the civilian population. Religious principles counted for little, since generals and whole armies could reverse alliances and march off to fight on the side of the highest bidder.

By the time the war ended, with the Peace of Westphalia—a treaty that took four years to negotiate—neither the Protestant nor the Catholic states of Germany had sufficient strength to dominate the nation. The result was a compromise: the treaty stipulated that “there shall be an exact and reciprocal equality amongst all the Electors, Princes and States of both Religions—all violence and force between the two parties being forever prohibited”. In contrast, most other European countries came out of the war with clearly defined religious majorities—Protestantism in Britain, the Netherlands and Sweden, Catholicism in France, Italy and Austria.

The Thirty Years War represents the low point of German history. The nation’s population was reduced from approximately 21 million to 13.5 million. Thousands of towns and tens of thousands of villages and castles were totally destroyed, and in some communities the local population was reduced to cannibalism. Furthermore, in concluding the Peace of Westphalia, the great powers purposefully preserved the fragmentation of Germany by recognizing more than 300 German states as sovereign entities. Small wonder that the German renaissance to which Albrecht V aspired in the mid-16th century never blossomed into full glory. Its only important literary monument is Martin Luther’s translation of the Bible, from Hebrew and Greek into German. This work was largely re-

sponsible for giving Germany a literary language, in the same way that the King James version of the Bible has left an indelible stamp on all subsequent English and American prose.

In the 17th century, once the smoke of war had finally lifted, Germany embarked on a long and impressive period of physical reconstruction and cultural ferment. The burgeoning baroque age produced many outstanding architects, as well as a spate of fascinating writers, scholars and musicians: for example, the author Grimmelshausen, whose novel *Simplicius Simplicissimus*

exposed the brutalities and absurdities of the just-concluded war; Leibniz, the mathematician and philosopher who theorized about the first principles of matter; and, perhaps the most significant of all, Johann Sebastian Bach.

Bach’s music, with its daring modulations and breathtaking counterpoints, is always unmistakably his own, but at the same time it sums up the *genius loci* of baroque Germany, with its logic, rationality, piety and imagination. His relationship to the epoch, however, was not just symbolic, for his career brought him into contact with



In this 16th-century German woodcut, half-naked provincial knights (small landholders) are in savage conflict with their exploitive overlords in a battle of the Knights' War of 1522. Two years later, a far greater rebellion, the Peasants' War, spread through south Germany.

Shown prodding the caged Hansel to see if he is fat enough to be eaten, the witch in *Hansel and Gretel* has terrified children since 1822, when Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm completed their 200 folk tales. *Grimm's Fairy Tales* remains a worldwide bestseller.

two of the pivotal monarchs of his time: Augustus the Strong, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, and Frederick the Great, King of Prussia.

Augustus the Strong was justly named for his physique as well as his political power; immensely tall and muscular, he liked to fight bears and bulls in the public ring, and to gallop through the streets of his capital, Dresden, holding the reins of his horse between his teeth and a street urchin in each hand. He personally designed the palaces and pleasure gardens that made Dresden the most beautiful city

in Germany; and he spent vast sums on art, ballets and pageants, and on elaborate jewellery especially designed for his courtesans. Most valuably, he supported research into the problem of producing Chinese porcelain, which, until then, had had to be imported from Asia at enormous expense. He was duly rewarded when Johann Friedrich Bottger, a ne'er-do-well chemist whom he kept prisoner in one of his castles, accidentally discovered the secret of making porcelain from local deposits of kaolin. The first European porcelain factory was established in a disused castle in Meissen, not far from Dresden, and Meissen (alias Dresden) china soon became one of the great luxury exports of Saxony.

After the death of Augustus in 1733, Berlin-born Frederick the Great emerged as the most popular ruler in eastern Germany. He had survived the rigours of his Prussian military education to become philosopher-king, famous for his taste in art, music and literature. He wrote poetry himself and learnt essays (in French, since he regarded the German language as fit only for peasants), played the flute, composed concertos and sonatas, and kept up a regular correspondence with Voltaire. Yet he also took an avid interest in military affairs. As a young king, he seized the rich province of Silesia from the Austrians. Then, in the Seven Years War (1756–1763), he defeated the armies of Saxony and subsequently managed to hold his own on two fronts against the combined forces of Austria, France, Russia and Sweden. By the end of his reign, in 1786, Prussia had been transformed into a major European power. For the next century and more, German history was to be increasingly focused on the city of Berlin and on the



gradual ascendancy of Prussia over the other states of Germany.

This process was first impeded, then facilitated, by the French Revolution and the ensuing Napoleonic Wars. Napoleon's armies had little difficulty conquering Prussia when—unlike such other German states as Bavaria, Baden and Württemberg—it refused to ally itself with France. Austria was also defeated, and it was Napoleon, in 1806, who finally dissolved the Holy Roman Empire—a venerable but then obsolete institution which Voltaire had sized up correctly as “neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire”. Henceforth the Habsburg monarch was to be known simply as “Emperor of Austria”. But in 1813, following the defeat of Napoleon's *grande armée* in Russia, Prussia joined the Anglo-Russian alliance, declared a “war of liberation”, achieved a major victory in the Battle of Leipzig, and contributed materially to Napoleon's final defeat at Waterloo. Thus, when the peace treaties were



drawn up at the Congress of Vienna in 1815, Prussia gained vast new tracts of territory, both in eastern and western Germany, and emerged as potentially the strongest nation in central Europe.

In Vienna, representatives of the victorious anti-French powers had deliberated for a period of nine months on how best to redraw the map of Europe and ensure a lasting peace for the member countries. In respect of Germany, where the French Revolution had inspired popular demands for constitutional government and a unified state, the statesmen warily compromised by reducing the total number of sovereign states, at that time 200, to 39. These were to form the German Confederation, a loose union under Austrian presidency. The Confederation comprised the two giants, Prussia and Austria; the minor kingdoms of Bavaria, Württemberg, Saxony and Hanover; various duchies and tiny principalities; and the free cities of Hamburg, Bremen, Lübeck

and Frankfurt am Main.

German nationalism and liberalism now gained considerable momentum within the Confederation. Successive kings of Prussia, however, refused to liberalize their governments, and the Berlin regime, together with the Austrian government of Chancellor Metternich, acquired the reputation of being one of Europe's most repressive police states. Not until a wave of popular revolutions had swept across the continent in 1848 did Prussia concede its people the rudiments of parliamentary representation.

In 1862, the gifted and iron-willed diplomat Otto von Bismarck became Prime Minister of Prussia. Two years later Prussian and Austrian troops jointly invaded Denmark and annexed the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein. But this conquest—which was followed by a dispute over the disposition of the duchies—served to fuel the mounting rivalry between the two major German powers. In 1866, the

Prussian army, with its murderous breech-loading needle-guns, overwhelmed the Austrians in the Seven Weeks War. This victory gave Bismarck a free hand to form a North German Federation of States north of the River Main, appointing himself Federal Chancellor, and so take a giant step towards the creation of a united Germany that would be entirely independent of Austria.

Finally, in 1870, Bismarck manoeuvred France into the Franco-Prussian War, which ended in January 1871, not only with the capitulation of Paris, but also with a carefully stage-managed meeting of German princes in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles Palace, at which Wilhelm I, the reigning King of Prussia, was proclaimed *Deutscher Kaiser* of a new German empire—the Second Reich. This empire comprised 25 states, 12 duchies and principalities, five grand duchies, four kingdoms, three free-cities, and territory—Alsace and part of Lorraine—



The German Empire in the 10th century.



Germany after the Peace of Westphalia (1648).

ceded by France. For the first time since Charlemagne, the whole of Germany, excluding Austria, was united under a single imperial crown.

The turbulent hundred years between the reign of Frederick the Great and Wilhelm I, Emperor of Germany, coincided with the long-delayed “Renaissance” of German arts and letters. In the latter part of the 18th century, the literary movement known as *Sturm und Drang*—Storm and Stress—prepared the way for the great classical epoch of Goethe and Friedrich Schiller, sovereign poets who, around 1800, turned the small town of Weimar into the capital city of German literature. Goethe’s *Faust*—a very modern portrait of an intellectual torn between materialism and idealism—turned out to be the most influential drama of the 19th century. Schiller’s *Ode to Joy* provided Ludwig van Beethoven with the humanist climax of his Ninth Symphony—the summation of everything

to which the German idealists aspired for the next century and a half: *Seid umschlungen Millionen*—“Let me embrace you, all the millions of this world!”

Hard on the heels of the classicists came the German Romantics, poets who sought a mystical “inner way” to human experience. They included Heinrich von Kleist, with his dramas of violence and passion; Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg) and his mysterious *Hymns to the Night*; the neo-Grecian poet Friedrich Hölderlin; the Brothers Grimm, indefatigable collectors of fairy tales and folk poems; E.T.A. Hoffmann, who specialized in tales of fantasy and imagination; and Heinrich Heine, who wrote lyrical love poems and also witty political satires, thereby obliging him to spend much of his life in Paris in order to escape the strictures of the Prussian censor.

German philosophy had come of age with Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* of 1781. By the 19th century, it seemed as though German thinkers

were destined to monopolize the field of philosophy—with the works of Hegel, Fichte, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and many others. A comparable development took place in German (and Austrian) music. Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Wagner and Brahms provided an apostolic succession of great composers who dominated the evolution of serious music at a time when every major German city prided itself on its opera company and symphony orchestra.

Yet, after unification in 1871, many German intellectuals began to sense the dangers inherent in the political and military successes of the Prussian-led empire. The poet-philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche took a close, hard look at the cultural consequences of the Second Reich and concluded that the price was too high. “One pays heavily for coming to power; power makes stupid. The Germans—once they were called the people of thinkers; do they do any thinking today? The Germans are

THE CHANGING SHAPE OF THE NATION



The German Empire, 1871–1918.

For more than a thousand years, the boundaries of Germany have altered with the fortunes of its rulers. The maps on the left show, in a simplified version, how some of the borders changed. The white area shows the shape of the two Germanys today; grey marks territories won; dark green indicates territories lost.

In the 10th century, the German Reich—a loose alliance of principalities—extended from the Netherlands to northern Italy, including Austria, Czechoslovakia and a substantial portion of France.

After the devastation of the Thirty Years War (1618–1648), Germany yielded territory to France and Sweden. The remainder of Germany was divided into more than 300 principalities, dukedoms, bishoprics and free cities.

The 19th century saw a new wave of expansion by German states, spearheaded by Prussia, the most powerful one. Their dominion—later known as the Second Reich—extended into Poland and dominated the Baltic until the end of World War I.

A CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS

1000–100 B.C. Primitive tribes, known collectively as *Germani*, occupy the land extending from the Baltic Sea to the Danube and from the Rhine to the Oder River.

9 B.C.–9 A.D. The Romans expand their empire eastwards to the Elbe, but in 9 A.D. a revolt by their German subjects leads to their withdrawal to the Rhine.

481–511 Clovis, King of the Franks, defeats various tribes and establishes the Frankish empire on what is now German and French soil.

800–843 Karl der Grosse (Charlemagne) crowned Emperor in Rome by the Pope. He consolidates and enlarges the Frankish empire to include most of Western Europe, except Britain. In 843 his empire is divided among his three grandsons. Louis the German receives the eastern Frankish kingdom, nucleus of the future German state.



1152–1190 Brilliant reign of Frederick I (above) of the Hohenstaufen dynasty. He converts to Christianity the Slavs of eastern Germany, and under his leadership, agriculture and industry begin to thrive.

1241 North German towns establish a trading association later called the Hanseatic League. But elsewhere, in the following decades, feuding nobles terrorize the country and disunity prevents Germany from becoming a national state—a process just

beginning in other European countries.

1440 In Mainz, inventor-publisher Johannes Gutenberg develops a revolutionary method of printing with movable type.



1500 Albrecht Dürer of Nuremberg, the greatest German Renaissance artist, completes his celebrated self-portrait (above) at the age of 29.

1517 Beginnings of the Protestant Reformation. Martin Luther presents his “95 theses”, condemning corrupt practices in the Catholic Church.

1524 Influenced by Luther’s teachings of social justice, peasants rise up against their feudal overlords, only to be crushed in one of the bloodiest social rebellions in European history.

1534 Publication of the Old Testament completes Luther’s translation of the Bible from Hebrew and Greek into vernacular German. It marks the birth of a standardized German language.

1555 Peace of Augsburg establishes that both Catholic and Protestant religions are equally acceptable; but the people must adopt the religion of their respective rulers, or emigrate.

1618–1648 Thirty Years War reduces the population of Germany by more than a third.

1701 Electorate of Brandenburg emerges as the most important Protestant state. As Elector, Frederick III renames his duchy the kingdom of Prussia and becomes King Frederick I. Some 40 years later, the third king of Prussia, popularly known as Frederick the Great, expands the kingdom, introduces a fairer legal code, and encourages cultural life at court.

1756 The Seven Years War—an Anglo–Prussian alliance against a coalition of Austria, Saxony, France and Russia—ends with Prussia’s emergence as a great power.

1803–1815 The Napoleonic Wars. At first French revolutionary armies are regarded as liberators by many Germans. Ludwig van Beethoven dedicates his third symphony, *Eroica*, to Napoleon, but later withdraws it in anger at Napoleon’s unrelenting expansionism. In 1807 Prussia is defeated by France. Eight years later Prussia leads the German states to drive out the French. The Congress of Vienna restores Prussian territories and a loose Confederation of German States is formed.

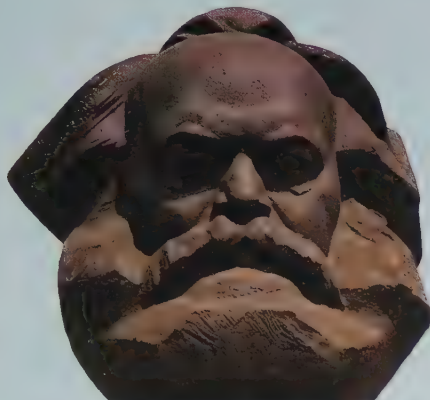
1830–1840 The beginnings of industrialization. In 1834 the German “Customs Union” is founded, creating a unified inland market. The first German railway opens in 1835 (below). A new class of factory workers emerges; and subsequently a labour movement.

1866–1867 Bismarck leads Prussia to victory over Austria in the Seven Weeks War. Austria ceases to be part



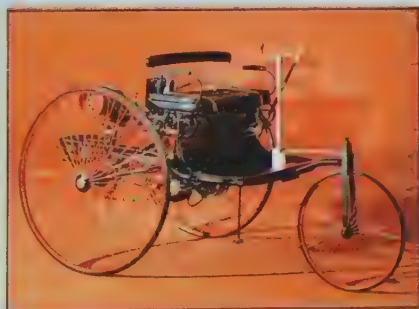
of the German Confederation. The South German states become allied to the North under the leadership of Prussia.

1867 In Hamburg, Karl Marx (*below*), publishes Volume I of *Das Kapital*, in which he claims that capitalism will plunge into chaos through its exploitation of the workers.



1870–1871 France declares war on Prussia. Aided by other German states, Prussia captures Paris and forces France to cede Alsace and part of Lorraine. Victory spurs the movement for German unification; the Prussian monarch, Wilhelm I, is proclaimed Emperor (Kaiser) of Germany, with Bismarck as the first Chancellor.

1885 In Mannheim, Karl Benz builds the first practical motor car (*below*), and in Stuttgart Gottlieb Daimler develops the gasoline engine, initially to power a motorcycle. Twelve years later in Augsburg Rudolf Diesel patents the diesel engine.



1914 Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand precipitates World War I.

1918 Capitulation of Germany. The Kaiser abdicates; the Weimar Republic is declared.

1919 Treaty of Versailles exacts huge

reparations, and reduces Germany's territory by about 13.5 per cent.

1929–1933 The Great Depression. Unemployment reaches six million—a third of the potential work force.

1933 Hitler appointed Chancellor by Hindenburg. He blames Communists when fire destroys a large part of the Reichstag (parliament) building, and suspends civil rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

1938 Hitler annexes Austria. The Munich Agreement is signed; Britain, France and Italy agree to Germany's occupation of predominantly German-speaking Sudeten areas of Czechoslovakia.

1939 Germany occupies the rest of Czechoslovakia and then invades Poland, so precipitating World War II.

1945 Defeated Germany is divided into four zones of occupation—American, British, French and Soviet. Berlin divided separately on the same basis.

1948–1949 Berlin is blockaded. Soviets close all land and water routes to Berlin. Western Allies supply the city for 10 months by air (*top, right*).



Economic Community (EEC).

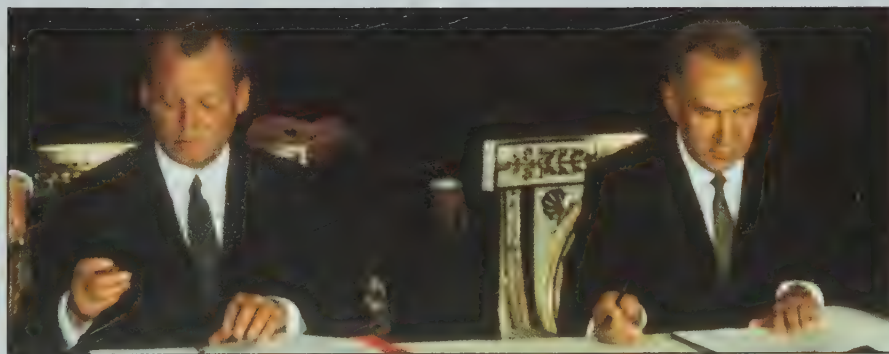
1961 East Germany erects the Berlin Wall, stemming the exodus to the west.

1969–1970 Willy Brandt becomes first Social Democratic Chancellor of West Germany. Government concludes non-aggression treaty with the U.S.S.R. and recognizes the Oder-Neisse line as Poland's western frontier (*below*).

1971 Erich Honecker succeeds Walter Ulbricht as First Secretary of the Communist Party in the GDR.

1972 Munich hosts the Olympic Games. Eleven Israeli athletes are killed by Palestinian guerrillas.

1973 East and West Germany



1949 Federal Republic of West Germany and German Democratic Republic of East Germany created. Konrad Adenauer of the Christian Democratic Union Party becomes first Chancellor of West Germany.

1953 East Germans rebel unsuccessfully against Communist regime. Demonstrations by East Berliners crushed by Soviet tanks.

1955 Federal Republic becomes a member of NATO, the GDR a member of the Warsaw Pact.

1957 West Germany signs the Rome Treaty which establishes the European

are admitted separately to the United Nations.

1974 Willy Brandt resigns when an official in the chancellery is arrested on charges of spying for the GDR. Helmut Schmidt succeeds as Chancellor.

1983 Helmut Kohl (CDU) elected Chancellor of West Germany. Green party gains first seats in the Bundestag. East and West Germany celebrate Martin Luther's 500th anniversary.

1986 East German President of the People's Chamber, Sintermann, visits West Germany promising eased travel restrictions between the two states.

now bored with the intellect, the Germans now mistrust the spirit; politics swallow up all serious concern for genuinely spiritual matters. '*Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles*'—I fear that was the end of German philosophy."

There were, of course, very compelling reasons for the Germans' mounting interest in the questions of power and politics. In the final decades of the 19th century, the country united by Bismarck underwent a period of rapid industrial and demographic change. In those years, Germany swiftly rose to the position of a major industrial

power, matching—and in some ways even surpassing—the two other economic giants in the world, Britain and the United States. At the same time, the population grew apace, from 41 million in 1871 to 65 million in 1911. Within a generation, towns like Duisburg, Essen, Leipzig and Kiel trebled or quadrupled their population.

Increased productivity allowed the industrialists and investors to accumulate wealth, which in turn was used to modernize and expand their enterprises. The search was on for new opportunities and for new markets, and

soon the cry for overseas colonies could be heard. But much of the world had already been divided up between the older colonial powers. Germany, as a latecomer, could not hope to achieve the imperialistic dreams of Kaiser Wilhelm II and many of the middle-class Germans, except by power-political pressure.

Wilhelm II, the most arrogant and erratic of Hohenzollern rulers, succeeded to the throne in 1888. After he had dismissed the aged Bismarck in 1890, his imperial policy became more and more aggressive, and Germany be-



A contemporary painting shows the Prussian Chancellor Bismarck riding to meet the defeated French Emperor Napoleon III after the Battle of Sedan in 1870. During the battle—turning-point of the Franco-Prussian War—over 80,000 French troops were taken prisoner, along with the emperor.

gan building a huge battle-fleet to provide diplomatic and military leverage against other powers. There was another reason for the Kaiser's naval build-up: rapid industrialization and population growth had created an industrial proletariat, who lived under appalling conditions of poverty in the exploding urban centres in the Rhineland, in Saxony and the Neckar river valley. The policy behind colonial expansion, fostering dreams of imperial greatness and wealth, was designed to distract people's attention from these domestic problems.

Meanwhile the Expressionist Movement in German art and literature, born at the turn of the century, tried to provide a humanist alternative to the growing aggressiveness that pervaded the government of Wilhelm II. Such artists as Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Max Pechstein and Max Beckmann looked beneath the impressionistic surface of things to discover the dark realities of life. Their dominant themes were anguish and compassion—for the urban poor, for victims of injustice, for mothers of dead children. "Truly it is not beauty and loveliness that are our strength," wrote the young sculptor and poet Ernst Barlach. "Our power lies rather in the opposite, in ugliness, in demonic passion." The Expressionist poets, feeling that the world was headed for disaster, tried to forestall it by appealing to the brotherhood of man. But these currents were weak by comparison with the mounting forces of militarism and expansionism: Europe had been transformed into an armed camp, and on June 28, 1914, the assassination of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand by a Serbian terrorist touched off the great powder keg.

On August 1, 1914, the German

A POSTAL PANTHEON OF MUSIC

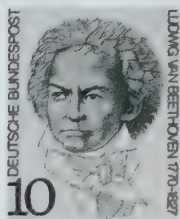


The roll call of German composers includes a high proportion of the acknowledged giants of Western music—a glorious heritage in which Germans have always taken pride. The postage stamps here—some issued by the GDR, some by the Federal Republic, others by pre-partition governments—offer one small proof of the nation's esteem.

Spanning four centuries, the composers here not only expanded the musical horizons of their own times, but live on in the repertoire of artists performing worldwide. They comprise Telemann, prolific genius of the baroque era; Johann Sebastian Bach, master of sacred and secular composition; Handel, noted for soul-stirring choral music

and concertos; the monumental and tormented Beethoven; Weber, known as the father of musical romanticism; Schumann, author of brilliant piano and chamber works; Wagner, whose operatic cycle *The Ring of the Niebulungen* drew on heroes from the German past; Brahms, creator of symphonies, sonatas, and songs inspired by European folk music; and Richard Strauss, composer of lavish operas and symphonic poems.

The nine are only a sampling from a phenomenal cultural tradition still very much alive today. Nurtured in its early days by the patronage of dukes and princes, German music east and west now benefits from opera houses, concert halls and state-subsidized schools.



government declared war on Russia; and within the next five days Germany declared war on France, Britain declared war on Germany, and Austria-Hungary declared war on Russia. The German army immediately marched into France, and into neutral Belgium, confident of being able to repeat its swift victory of 1870. Instead, the army became bogged down in a bloody four-year war of attrition, in the east and in the west. All the major belligerents suffered enormous front-line casualties. Germany and its ally, Austria, were further hurt because of food and raw material shortages caused by a naval blockade organized by the British.

Aroused most of all by Germany's unrestricted submarine warfare, the

United States entered the war in 1917 and rushed fresh troops to France in time to thwart the last-ditch German offensive in the spring of 1918. With civilian morale almost at a breaking-point and the Western front about to collapse, Wilhelm II was forced to abdicate and go into exile. On the same day, November 9, the Social Democrats—the only political party that still commanded mass support in Germany—proclaimed the establishment of a republic and began to organize a provisional government. Then, on November 11, the armistice was signed. Firing ceased at 11 a.m., but in Germany another struggle, brief yet critical, was just beginning: the confrontation between those forces who

supported a parliamentary republic and those who sought to establish a socialist or communist system.

The Social Democrats were fully prepared when left-wing riots broke out in December 1918 and January 1919. They had made a deal with the generals by which it was agreed that the Imperial Army would help to maintain law and order and, in return, the Social Democrat government would leave the army organization intact. Furthermore, it was arranged that volunteer units—financed by industry and constituted by army officers—should be formed to quell left-wing challenges to government authority. These units, called the Free Corps, attracted right-wing extremists who



On Christmas Day 1914, during a brief truce in the World War I battle-zone, German troops in the trenches celebrate by decorating the traditional tree. Pictures like this, taken by official war photographers, were sent home from the front to boost public morale.

were to show excessive zeal in stamping out, rather than quelling, political opposition to the Social Democrats.

The first major clash of arms came early in January when an uprising was staged in Berlin by various left-wing factions, including the Spartacus League, a political group named after the leader of a slave revolt in ancient Rome and partly inspired by the Russian Revolution of 1917. This group, the forerunner of the Communist Party of Germany, was demanding the creation of a democratic republic of workers' councils and also seeking to prevent the re-emergence of the old capitalist-imperialist forces, which they held responsible for Germany's plight at the end of World War I. But their attempted coup, badly led and ill-conceived, had no chance against the government troops. Many rebels were shot down in cold blood before the street fighting ended on January 12. Then, on January 15, members of the Free Corps hunted down, arrested and murdered the two most important leaders of the Spartacus League, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, so creating revolutionary martyrs who are now exalted in the history books of the GDR.

Four days afterwards, elections for a National Assembly were held. The Assembly was convened at Weimar on February 6 to draft the Constitution, and afterwards Friedrich Ebert, leader of the Social Democrats, was elected the first President of the new democratic republic. This was commonly known as the Weimar Republic, but Berlin remained the capital and cultural centre, and there the law continued to be administered by long-standing judges and civil servants who had never fully accepted the new regime. Furthermore, German industry con-



Armed with a machine-gun, members of the left-wing Spartacus League—some wearing their wartime army uniforms—prepare to fight during the Berlin uprising of January 1919. After a week of street combat, the anti-government rebellion was violently quelled by right-wing volunteers.

tinued to concentrate wealth and power in the hands of a privileged few.

Thus the Weimar Republic began its 14-year lifespan with many handicaps; and it gained still greater ones on June 28, 1919. That day the Treaty of Versailles was signed in the Hall of Mirrors where the German Empire had been inaugurated in 1871. It caused Germany to lose about 13.5 per cent of its pre-war territory, including Alsace-Lorraine (ceded to France), northern Schleswig (ceded to Denmark) and West Prussia and almost all of Posen (ceded to Poland). In the process, Germany lost about 10 per cent of its population. And later the Allies presented their crippling bill for war damages: 132,000 million gold marks to be paid by Germany in 59 annual instalments.

These astronomical reparations con-

tributed to a disastrous period of inflation. Before World War I, an American dollar was worth 4.20 marks. By mid-November, 1923, shortly before the introduction of a stable currency, one dollar was worth 6,600 billion marks. The climate was now ideal for the growth of extremist parties: the Communists gained marked support in Saxony and Thuringia, and they launched a short-lived uprising in Hamburg; and the following month, in Munich, a relatively new party—the National Socialists (Nazis), led by Austrian-born Adolf Hitler, an unemployed postcard painter and disgruntled war veteran—tried to coerce the right-wing Bavarian government into joining a revolutionary march on Berlin. Subsequently, in the quelling of the so-called "Beer Hall Putsch", 16 Nazis

THE NAZIS' RISE TO POWER



A standard bears the swastika, the Nazi symbol.



Leaders of the 1923 Putsch meet at their trial.



Bare-chested Nazis mock a ban on their uniforms.

In the autumn of 1919, the Munich-based Nazi Party—then known as the German Workers' Party—was a palpable farce. It was without effective leadership, organization or policy; it had a membership of only a few dozen malcontents, and its total assets amounted to 7.50 marks (about £2). Just 14 years later, it was the sole political party of a nation of 66 million people.

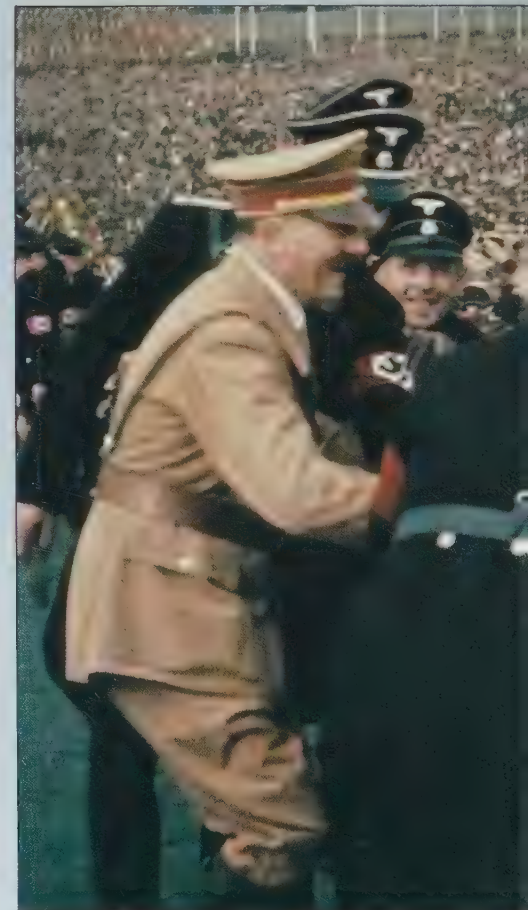
The meteoric rise to power of the Nazis was essentially the work of one man—Adolf Hitler. In 1919, he joined the party as an obscure army corporal who had been twice wounded—and twice decorated for bravery—in World War I. He was also a fervent nationalist and gifted rabble-rouser, and soon dominated his colleagues. In 1920, he renamed the group the National Socialist German Workers' Party, or Nazis. Then he had the swastika and the "Heil" salute adopted as symbols.

He also recruited a private army of brown-shirted Stormtroopers, the *Sturmabteilung* (SA), to guard his meetings and intimidate opponents. But Hitler's most effective weapon was his oratory. Intuitively, he played on the fears of the German people in the post-war climate of economic crisis and social unrest; unendingly he blamed Germany's misfortunes on foreigners, Jews, Communists and the weak German government which had accepted the crippling terms of the Treaty of Versailles.

In 1923, Hitler made his first bid for power. Supported by some 600 armed followers, he seized Bavarian state leaders in a Munich beer hall, fired a shot into the ceiling, and cried, "The National Revolution has begun". But the following day, he led a mass march that clashed disastrously with the police. Sixteen Nazis and three policemen were killed; Hitler and nine others were arrested and tried for high treason.

Hitler, who was to serve only nine months of a five-year sentence,

brilliantly exploited his trial to make himself one of the most talked-of figures in Germany. More importantly, the "Beer Hall Putsch" taught him patience, and convinced him that the way to power was through ballots not bullets. The Great Depression of the early 1930s provided the climate for a dramatic Nazi revival. In 1928, the Nazi Party had only 12 of the 608 seats in the Reichstag parliament. In 1932, with 230 seats, it was by far the largest political group in Germany. The following year, Hitler became Chancellor and began to contrive—by legal means and by bloody intrigue—to establish an absolute dictatorship.





Nazi troops parade through Berlin in 1933 to celebrate Hitler's chancellorship.



A million citizens salute their *Führer* on his arrival at the annual Harvest Festival of 1937.

were killed; Hitler, among others, was charged with high treason and given a five-year prison sentence, eventually reduced to nine months, which were spent in the Landsberg Fortress, in a relatively congenial section that was reserved for political prisoners.

In the following years there were signs of growing stability in Germany. But economic recovery depended considerably on foreign credit, and in 1929, when the Wall Street Crash sent shock waves around the world, no country was more severely shaken than Germany. The Depression restored the ideal climate for extremists' politics, and the Nazis prospered most of all, aided by a private army of thugs and sycophants—the brown-shirted “Stormtroopers”—who were organized to defend Nazi political meetings, to disrupt any rival meetings, and to harry and intimidate Jews, who were made the prime scapegoats for all of Germany's misfortunes.

From the start, the Nazis' greatest asset was Hitler, a spell-binding orator who preached a quasi-mystical farrago of militant nationalism, revenge against the authors of the punitive Treaty of Versailles, and rabid anti-Semitism. Cunningly he appealed to the frustrations and resentments of the social groups that had been especially hard-hit by the war and the economic crises of 1923 and 1929. Most prominent among them were the farmers, the self-employed and the professionals, especially those in the provinces of the Protestant North. These middle class groups provided the main support for the Nazi successes at the polls between 1929 and 1932.

Early in 1933, Hitler, as leader of the largest party in the Reichstag, was appointed Chancellor by Marshal von

Hindenburg, the ageing President of the moribund Weimar Republic. The self-styled *Führer* (Leader) promptly implemented what he had always promised: a brutal dictatorship, officially designated the Third Reich. His political opponents were arrested, killed, or driven into exile. By the summer of 1934, having gained complete command of a ruthless police state, Hitler began his next objective: the organization of Germany's highly industrialized economy for war.

The rest is the best-known and the blackest page of modern European history. In 1938 and 1939, while the leaders of France, Britain and the Soviet Union tried to appease him, Hitler gained control of Austria and Czechoslovakia without a struggle. In August 1939, he signed a non-aggression treaty with the U.S.S.R., and the following month he precipitated World War II by invading Poland. In 18 days Poland was conquered, and was subsequently divided between Germany and the Soviet Union. By June 1940, Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium and France had also fallen. At this point, Italy entered the war as an ally of Germany, attacking Greece and Egypt as Germany began bombing raids on British cities and making plans for Operation Sea Lion, the invasion of Britain. Meanwhile, Hitler's police and "security" units had started his programme of annihilating the Jews, gypsies and dissenters, ultimately sending millions of men, women and children to gas chambers and death factories. It was a form of genocide that had no precedent in history—the scientific and methodically organized extermination of six million people.

Having failed to gain air supremacy in the Battle of Britain, Germany de-

cided to postpone Operation Sea Lion indefinitely. Hitler was intent on a far more ambitious plan, known as Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union. It began on June 22, 1941—the day on which Napoleon began his disastrous 1812 campaign—and it was, without doubt, Hitler's first great error of the war.

Initially, the German advance was spectacular. By October, after inflicting appalling losses upon the Soviets, German armoured units had pushed to within 24 kilometres of Moscow. But Hitler, anxious not to repeat Napoleon's mistake of concentrating all his resources on the capture of the Soviet capital, now gave priority to other military objectives. The decision, contrary to the advice of his generals, gave Moscow time to reinforce its desperately weak defences. Meanwhile, the German armoured divisions became hopelessly bogged down in the November snow, slush and ice of a particularly severe Russian winter. And then, one month later, Hitler made his second grave error. Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, he declared war

on the United States, completely underestimating that country's ability to influence the war in Europe.

In Germany, the impact of the war was not severely felt until 1942. Early that year total mobilization had been introduced. In May, the Royal Air Force made the first 1,000-bomber raid on a major German city (Cologne). Later, the number of war casualties returning from the Russian front began to mount alarmingly. In November, Hitler's stubborn refusal to allow a retreat resulted in 22 German divisions being surrounded near Stalingrad (now called Volgograd). When General Friedrich Paulus finally surrendered on January 31, 1943, his Sixth Army comprised 220,000 men out of an original total of 1.5 million. At the same time, the Allied forces were achieving significant victories in the North African campaign. It marked the turning of the tide of war.

In 1943, Anglo-American forces invaded Italy, the Allies began to gain the ascendancy in the Battle of the Atlantic, the bombing of German cities became increasingly severe, and steadily the Soviets clawed back their ravaged land. Then, on June 6, 1944, the Allies created a "second front" by the invasion of Normandy. By early September, all France and most of Belgium had been liberated. But the hopelessly outnumbered German forces resisted so firmly that it was not until March 7, 1945, that the Allies crossed the Rhine, at Remagen, and swept into the heartland of the Third Reich, meeting the Soviet advance from the east.

On April 30, 1945—with Soviet troops only a block or two away—Hitler and his bride Eva Braun committed double suicide in the underground *Führerbunker* near the centre



Fourteen-year-old German soldiers, captured by the British near Bremen, await transportation to a camp for prisoners of war. In 1944, in a desperate attempt to replenish their exhausted forces, the German command recruited boys of only 12.



As Soviet tanks roll through the streets of Berlin in 1945, a jubilant Russian hoists the Red Flag above the shattered Reichstag, former seat of government. A few hundred metres away, the *Führer's* charred remains were found.

of devastated Berlin. On the evening of May 1, news of the *Führer's* death was broadcast to the solemn accompaniment of music from Wagner and Bruckner's Seventh Symphony. The following day Berlin fell to the Red Army, and six days later the Third Reich was formally ended with the unconditional surrender of all German forces. Hitler's war was over—at a cost of an estimated 50 million lives.

There is much evidence to suggest that Hitler was close to complete insanity towards the end of his life. He was never willing to recognize the inevitability of defeat for his country, still imagining that some chance event might somehow reverse Germany's misfortunes (for example, the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt on April 13 lifted his hopes for a time). His moods were wildly erratic, and he was given to half-crazed outbursts that underlined his paranoia. However, even during those final, doom-laden weeks in the *Führerbunker*, Hitler was able to give one last reminder of his peculiar gift of understanding power politics. On April 2, in a monologue recorded by his deputy, Martin Bormann, he outlined his vision of the future:

With the defeat of the Reich, there will remain in the world only two Great Powers capable of confronting each other—the United States and Soviet Russia. The laws of both history and geography will compel these two powers to a trial of strength, either military or in the fields of economics and ideology. These same laws make it inevitable that both Powers should become enemies of Europe. And it is equally certain that both these Powers will sooner or later find it desirable to seek the support of the sole surviving great nation in Europe, the German people.

4



The huge parabolic reflector of a satellite tracking station at Raisting, 50 kilometres from Munich, dwarfs a passing tractor and a neighbouring church. The dish pans across the sky, receiving international telephone messages transmitted via communications satellites.



THE ECONOMICS OF SUCCESS

In July 1945, two months after Hitler's heirs had surrendered unconditionally to the Allied armies, U.S. military governor Lieutenant-General Lucius D. Clay moved into his office in the American sector of Berlin and took stock of Germany's bitter post-war harvest. "The city was paralysed," he later reported. "Shortage of fuel had stopped the wheels of industry. Suffering and shock were visible in every face. Police and fire protection had broken down. Almost 3,000 breaks in the water mains were still to be repaired. Motor ambulances were not available, and transport of the sick and dead was by hand-stretcher or cart. Bodies remained in canals and lakes and were being dug out from under bomb debris."

This was *Stunde Null*, "Hour Zero", as Germans dubbed the nadir of their fortunes at the end of World War II. Ninety-five per cent of Berlin's centre had been destroyed by bombing and street fighting, and in the rest of the rat-infested city only one house in four was still habitable. Most of Germany's other major cities had suffered on a comparable scale.

Altogether, more than three million homes were lost. The devastated areas were buried under an estimated 400 million cubic metres of rubble, and from the ruins there rose the stench of the entombed dead.

Not only houses had gone; a large section of Germany's industrial infrastructure had been obliterated. Many

power plants, docks, railway bridges, canals and telephone exchanges were in ruins. A total of nearly 250,000 tonnes of bombs, dropped on the transport systems of the European battle zones between October 1944 and March 1945, had virtually cut Germany off from the outside world and halted communications within the country itself. Meanwhile, through this apocalyptic land travelled the dispossessed: bombed-out, evacuated families, expellees from Germany's former territories in the east, refugees from the Soviet zone of occupation, returning prisoners-of-war, and men and women who had worked as slave labourers under the Nazis. In the spring of 1945, two out of every five Germans were on the move. A year later, the number of expellees and refugees in the three Western zones exceeded five million; by 1950 it had risen to seven million.

Hunger drove this vagrant army—hunger and the search for shelter, fuel and clothing. Each day in August 1945, 4,000 Berliners died of malnutrition, and half the babies born that month failed to survive. At the end of the year, it was found that only 12 per cent of the children in Cologne had a weight normal for their age. While U.S. occupation forces were given a daily ration of 4,200 calories, Germans in some parts of the country were making do with a mere 700 calories per person per day—less than half the amount prescribed by the League of Nations in 1936 as the

minimum necessary for an adult. In the British zone, the ration dropped in some instances to only 400 calories per day—less than the figure for inmates of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp under the Nazis.

Since World War I, highly industrialized Germany had depended on exports of manufactured goods to pay for its food, but in the immediate aftermath of the war industrial production was at a halt. Eventually, with the rubble cleared away, it was found that most of the bomb-damaged factories were salvageable, but there was little incentive to get the wheels of industry turning again since it was impossible to obtain raw materials—not even the coal to fuel the fires of industry. The coal was there to be mined, but there were no textiles to clothe workers, no rubber for the air-hoses of pneumatic drills, no watches to regulate shifts or alarm clocks to get the miners out of bed, no light bulbs to illuminate underground workings, no transport system to get the coal to the factories.

During the closing weeks of World War II, Hitler had told Albert Speer, Minister for Armaments and War Production, “If the war is to be lost, the nation will also perish. This fate is inevitable. There is no need to consider the basis even of a most primitive existence any longer.” At “Hour Zero”—Germany’s lowest ebb since the Thirty Years War ended in 1648—it seemed the Führer had not exaggerated. To Germans and non-Germans alike, there seemed little hope that the defeated nation could climb out of the abyss into which it had plunged.

Anyone who witnessed “Hour Zero” and returned to Germany 20 years later could be forgiven for having imagined



Three churches that rose conspicuously above the wartime rubble of Frankfurt in 1945 (*below*) are now barely visible among new high-rise buildings housing banks and insurance companies (*right, below*). Frankfurt has been a major financial centre since the 16th century.

that they were in a different country. In place of the four Occupation zones there were two Germanys. In West Berlin, where Governor Clay had looked out at a city so choked with rubble that the post-war British Labour Government had estimated that it would take 30 years simply to remove the debris, the streets were lined with modern apartment blocks, offices, banks and factories. Throughout West Germany, more than five million dwellings had been built on the ruins of the old. The shops were crammed with washing machines, televisions, radios and other consumer goods—the same German makes that were being offered for sale in London, New York and Paris; indeed, in any country whose consumers could afford to pay for goods that were rapidly acquiring the repu-

tation of being the best in the world. On the streets, Mercedes, Porsches and BMWs moved among the swarms of more workaday Volkswagens.

In the German Democratic Republic in 1965, the signs of affluence were much less marked. However, in the capital, East Berlin, only the occasional bomb-site bore witness to the destitution of the immediate post-war years. In Alexanderplatz, the restored main square dominated by modern high-rise blocks, there was an exhibition that included bars of grey, coarse soap, pots made from steel helmets, sieves contrived from gas-mask filters, and old shoes patched with cardboard. Beside these relics from the post-war years, a sign asked: “Can you still remember?”

Four years after the building of the Berlin Wall and the stabilization of the



GDR work force, East Germany's economy had only just begun to make impressive progress. In West Germany, statistics confirmed—as living standards suggested—that a miraculous recovery had already been achieved. Between 1950 and 1964, the Federal Republic had increased its gross national product threefold, its gold and currency reserves by more than 2,000 per cent, its exports by more than 500 per cent. On average, its industrial growth had been twice that of the U.S. In 1964 it was second only to the U.S. as an exporter of goods and a producer of automobiles.

This totally unforeseen economic revival captured the imagination of the Western world. *Wirtschaftswunder*, “economic miracle”, journalists called it, and indeed there seemed to be some-

thing providential about the amazing scale of the recovery. It was, of course, essentially dependent on the immense will and ability of the German people to work hard and conscientiously when the need arose. In the 1950s, West Germans had the longest working week in Europe (on average, 48 hours) and they were renowned for their efficiency. Such diligence, however, does not adequately explain this astonishing recovery. Numerous other factors, by chance and by design, converged to make it possible.

At “Hour Zero” Germany's economic potential was, despite the surface damage, surprisingly strong. Four years of intensive bombing had, in reality, destroyed only about 10 per cent of the country's factories and plants—so little, for example, that on the eve of de-

feat the Ruhr was still producing more steel than at any time since 1939. For several years after the war, the shortage of coal and lack of transport facilities held back industrial production. Dismantling for reparation also reduced Germany's industrial capacity. But in the British and American zones, at least, dismantling was limited, amounting to only 5 per cent of industrial plant. Moreover, it proved to the long-term advantage of some dismantled industries that they were compelled to reorganize completely with modern machinery and equipment.

One such industrial giant was the August Thyssen Hütte in Duisburg, pre-war Germany's largest steel producer. Although it was attacked 96 times by Allied bombers in 1944 and 1945, it was largely intact at the end of the war. However, by the time dismantling was halted in 1949, it had lost 118,000 tonnes of plant and equipment, 80 per cent of its work force, and production was down from more than 2 million tonnes to only a few hundred thousand tonnes a year. Nevertheless, under the leadership of Hans-Günther Sohl, the virtually dismembered industrial complex was soon rebuilt and it became the largest and most modern steelworks in Europe. And by 1973 it was the third largest steel company in the world, behind Nippon Steel of Japan and the United States Steel Corporation.

None of this could have been achieved without massive investment, and though post-war Germany seemed superficially an investor's nightmare, the fact that Sohl received the necessary finance shows that the potential for economic growth was recognized. Economists sometimes estimate a country's investment potential by cal-

culating the relationship of industrial capital stock to the size of the available work force; if the amount of capital per head is low, the potential for productive investment is high. This was the case in West Germany in 1948: the increase of industrial plant between 1939 and 1948 amounted to about 11 per cent, but the growth of the available labour force far outstripped this figure.

Although Germany had lost more than 4.5 million citizens in the war, migrations of expellees and refugees actually produced an increase in population in the Western Zones. By 1948 this amounted to a 20 per cent rise over the population level of the same area in 1939. The potential labour force did not expand as rapidly as the general population; nevertheless, in 1948 there were almost 18 per cent more people available for work than there had been in 1936. This labour force provided a

huge reservoir of highly skilled workers for all branches of industry; at the same time it created a gigantic consumer market and stimulated the construction of housing.

Different dates have been given for the beginning of West Germany's economic revival, but many experts judge that it was the currency reform of June 20, 1948 that launched the recovery. Under this reform, introduced by the Western Allies as a means of destroying the dominant black market and barter economy, the discredited Reichsmark was replaced in their zones by the Deutsche Mark. Every citizen was at first limited to DM 40 in exchange for 40 old marks, and later a further DM 20 was allotted on a one-for-one basis. Thereafter, funds held in Reichsmarks were redeemed at the rate of 15 to 1.

The reform was received by West Germans with mixed feelings. On the

one hand, it virtually eliminated at a stroke the entire debt of the former Reich. On the other hand, it reduced the value of the mark by 93 per cent. The key point, however, was that the new Deutsche Mark actually had purchasing power—even if its value was based on the hopes and expectations of its recipients rather than on any supporting reserves of gold or silver. The new issue was so small that everyone was short of money. All at once, for the first time since the war, cash was in greater demand than material objects; and so shopkeepers and tradesmen immediately put their hoarded goods on the open market.

Soon afterwards, the Munich newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* described the reaction—and incidentally used the word “miracle” for perhaps the first time in connection with the West German economy. “The new German Mark has wrought miracles. It has brought out the hoarded stocks and has filled many shop windows. The new Mark has stimulated overnight a great deal of growth. Now, all of a sudden, you can get folders, brushes, press studs, thermos flasks, shoelaces, clothes buttons, tools, heat-resistant milk pans, frying pans for electric stoves, penknives, every sort of needle, rubber bands, Al floor polish, leather gloves, ties . . .”

But it was not the currency reform alone that set the economy moving forward in June 1948. Equally important was a bold gamble by Professor Ludwig Erhard, newly appointed director of the Economic Administration of the joint British and American zones. Two days after the currency reform, he announced the end of rationing and plans for the abolition of the intricate network of price and wage controls that

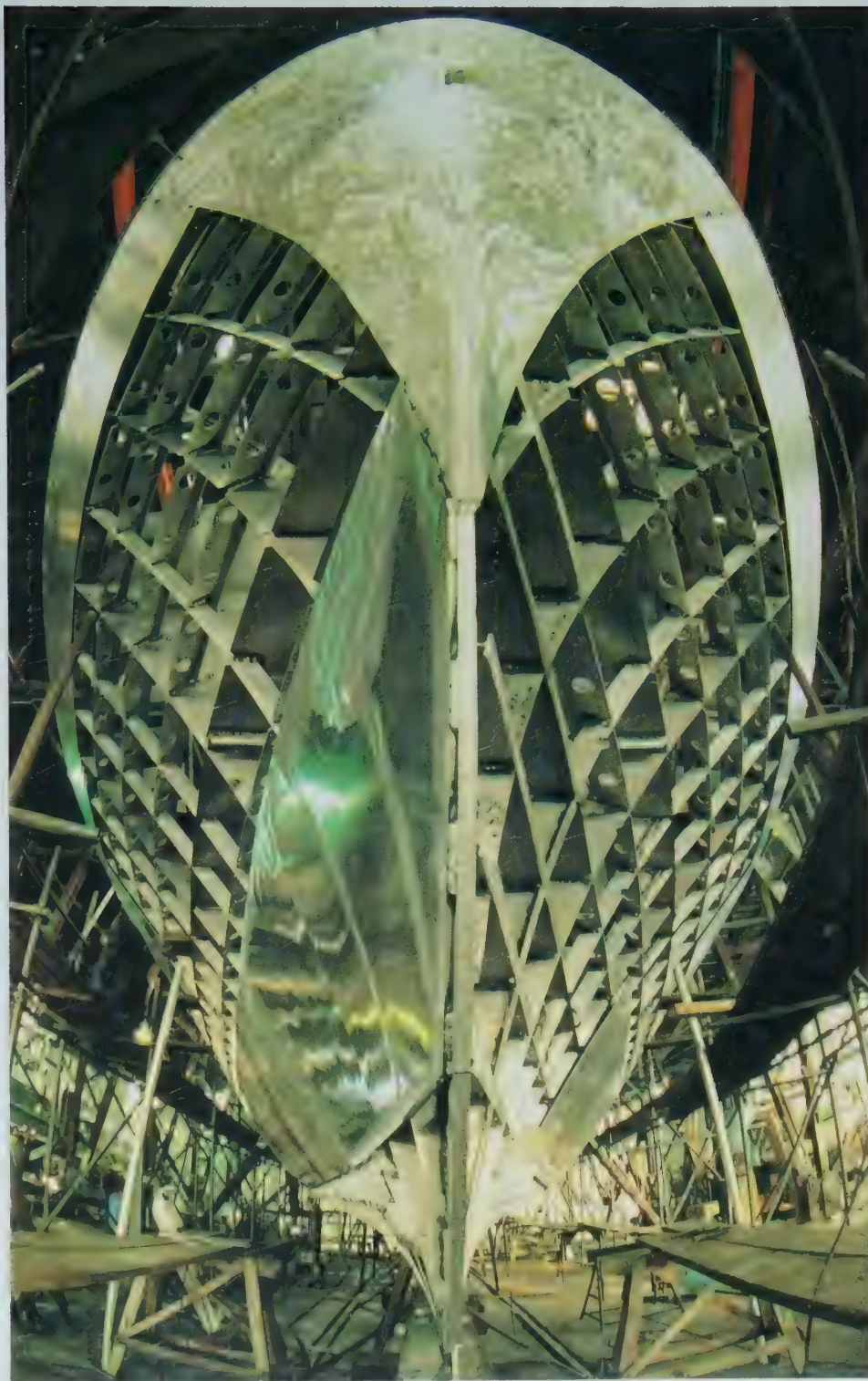


In an East Berlin factory, a welder works on a component for a barge for use on East Germany's waterways. Following reforms in 1963, wages and bonuses in shipbuilding and other nationalized industries have been linked with profits to try and raise productivity and improve standards.

had survived the fall of the Third Reich. His announcement was received with howls of protest from Germans who feared that the abolition of controls would cause prices to soar. Initially, prices did rise; in response, the trade union movement called a one-day general strike, and demonstrators marched with signs proclaiming "Erhard to the gallows". But Erhard refused to reverse his decision, arguing that the shortage of goods would stimulate the consumer-oriented industries and thus inevitably dampen inflation. He was eventually proved right. By the mid-1950s, prices of food and other necessities had begun to drop; and over the next decade the cost of living index rose only 16 per cent, compared to 45 per cent in Britain and more than 50 per cent in France.

Ironically, this boost to the economy was administered by Allied officials who only three years earlier, in the bitter atmosphere of the war's aftermath, had agreed that the defeated nation should be kept economically crippled for generations to come. Now times had dramatically changed; the Western powers and the Soviet Union had taken up their polarized positions, and the U.S. especially was alert to the danger of Communism gaining credibility in an economically crippled West Germany. In December 1949, the newly founded Federal Republic began to receive American economic aid under the European Recovery Programme, popularly known as the Marshall Plan after the man who proposed it, U.S. Secretary of State, George Marshall. In the next five years, the Americans pumped over 1.4 billion dollars of aid into the West German economy.

Necessarily, the farmers were among the first beneficiaries. Agricultural



Under construction near Bremen, a coastal rescue ship receives a double aluminium shell to withstand rough seas and ice off West Germany's north coast. The marine construction industry is concentrated in Hamburg and the Bremen area on the North Sea, and Kiel on the Baltic.

COLLECTIVE CRAFTS IN A SOCIALIST STATE

In the Erzgebirge mountains on the GDR's border with Czechoslovakia, south of Leipzig, a 300-year-old handicraft tradition flourishes as strongly as ever. Almost all the traditional wooden Christmas toys and decorations—animals, angels, nutcrackers—sold in West Germany and the eastern part of the country, are made in the village of Seiffen, where carved toys have been produced by local families without

a break since the 17th century.

Even in the nationalized economy of East Germany, the toy-makers of Seiffen—some 60 per cent of a population of about 4,000—are self-employed, since state ownership has never been systematically undertaken in the sector of handicraft production. But, as with many of the East German cottage industries, most of the craftsmen are organized into

either combines or collectives.

Each combine distributes annual dividends similar to the bonuses paid in the nationalized enterprises and helps its members invest in modern labour-saving equipment. The international market for these much-loved wooden toys is a vigorous one, especially at Christmas. Some 50 per cent of the output is exported, providing a valuable source of foreign currency.



For a craftsman in a present-day co-operative, an electric lathe makes the production of tiny carvings quicker than it was for his predecessors.





A troop of tiny painted animals is mustered in front of Noah's ark.



A ring shaped to a horse's silhouette on a lathe is cut into pieces that will be finished by hand.

production rapidly advanced with increased use of machinery and fertilizers; and this helped to hold down food prices at a time when incomes were low. But no injection of capital could rectify fundamental weaknesses in the structure and organization of German agriculture. Quite simply, there were far too many small, impractical farming units. More than half of all farms were incapable of supporting four or more families, an overwhelming majority were smallholdings run entirely by a single family, and fewer than a third of all farms were economically viable. While productivity continued to rise throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the number of farms declined by one third and the agricultural work force fell from five million to 2.2 million. This followed a pattern of decline which began in the 19th century, when about three quarters of all Germany's population was engaged in farming, and which has continued until this day, when only 1.6 million people—less than 7 per cent of the West German labour force—works in agriculture, stock-raising, forestry and fishing.

Agriculture was the one sector of the economy that did not experience a post-war "miracle". In 1950, the Germans most shrewdly put the largest share of their Marshall Aid to the best long-term use by channelling the funds into industrial sectors that were short of the capital necessary for essential plant modernization. Industries that benefited most significantly were mining, steel, energy and transport. Meanwhile, the economy was given another timely boost.

Unlike the conquering Allies, West Germany did not carry the economic burden of military expenditure in the immediate post-war years. On the

other hand, the Federal Republic was in a position to profit handsomely from the Korean War, which broke out in June 1950. During the months preceding the war, imports had been growing faster than exports; West Germany was seriously in debt to other members of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC), the agency that handled Marshall Aid, and unemployment had risen to more than one million. Then the Far East conflict triggered off a huge demand for iron, steel and heavy machinery—a demand that West Germany, with its great reservoir of cheap, skilled labour, was supremely well-equipped to supply.

The “Korea boom” helped to solve West Germany’s balance of payments crisis; and when the war ended in 1953, it was the Republic’s trade surplus that was embarrassing, not its deficits. During this period, Britain’s debts to West Germany steadily mounted; by 1954 they were so large that a British politician was heard to remark that the OEEC was “getting too tight for its clothes—one might almost say Professor Erhard was bursting out of them”.

Professor Ludwig Erhard, son of a Bavarian tailor, was a corpulent man whose large cigar and expansive paunch had become the symbols of his country’s growing prosperity. As Economics Minister from 1949 to 1963, he sought to develop a free “social market” economy—that is to say, an economic system in which the free play of market forces was tempered by a limited degree of government regulation to protect the weak, to hinder the growth of monopolies, and to facilitate some redistribution of wealth. In practice, his form of economy was not greatly distinguished for its social conscious-

ness, nor did it always adhere rigidly to market principles. Nevertheless, his policies were undeniably a vital factor in the extraordinary progress of war-crippled West Germany—by 1964 the third economic power in the world.

Credit, too, must be given to Konrad Adenauer, the conservative leader of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and its Bavarian sister-party the Christian Social Union (CSU). Adenauer became the Federal Republic’s first Chancellor at the age of 73 and served with undiminished energy for 14 years. He did not always agree with Erhard’s economic policies. However, by way of statesmanship, he made a vital contribution to West Germany’s economic growth. In November 1949, for example, his diplomatic skill persuaded the Western powers to cease dismantling in key sectors of German industry. Most notably, he was dedicated to the unification of Western Europe; and the climax of his efforts came in March 1957, when West Ger-

many joined with France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg in signing the Treaty of Rome to found the European Economic Community.

Meanwhile, under Erhard’s guidance West German investment policy played an important part in assisting industrial growth. Tax concessions were granted to encourage entrepreneurs to reinvest their earnings, and industries that found it hard to raise capital were allowed to write off capital investments fairly quickly. Other government measures were to make overtime tax-free and to fix fairly low rates of tax on high incomes. By using tax concessions to pay for investment, Erhard effectively transferred resources from the general population to industry and the employers. At the cost of the consumer, industry had more capital to invest. At the same time, incentives were mounted to encourage industry to sell its goods abroad.

Government policy thus helped to set a pattern for the West German



In a Berlin plant of the Siemens company, West Germany’s largest electrical manufacturer, a Turkish employee applies anti-corrosive paint to a generator component. Germany’s work force includes some two million foreigners, nearly half of them of Turkish origin.

INNOVATIONS IN TRANSPORT TECHNOLOGY



Designed for speeds up to 400 kilometres per hour, an electro-magnetic train undergoes trials at Emsland, near the Dutch border.

A highly sophisticated engineering industry has kept West Germany in the vanguard of transport technology. One current project is a revolutionary railway that eliminates physical contact between the train and the railway track. Thanks to the absence of

friction, the hovertrain—which is drawn forward by magnetic forces—can travel safely and smoothly at speeds reaching up to 400 kilometres per hour, double the speed of conventional trains.

Other West German innovations that are now being tested or are

already in production range from a solar-powered car to a mobile airport terminal on wheels, from a computer-operated bus for 240 passengers to a small dashboard computer that can be linked into a motorway control centre to find the quickest way out of traffic jams.

economy that has characterized its growth ever since—namely, a combination of very high levels of investment, a strong export orientation and a relatively low level of the GNP going towards wages. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, between 25 and 27 per cent of West Germany's GNP went into capital investment, as against 18 per cent in Britain. During the same period, wages amounted to only 47 per cent of West Germany's GNP, as against 58 per cent in Britain.

Apart from Professor Erhard, the symbols of West Germany's economic success were the new millionaires—entrepreneurs and self-made tycoons

such as Max Grundig, who built up an electronics empire from an eight-man company that assembled radio kits in a laundry in Fürth; Axel Springer, who started out with a guide to radio programmes and came to own one of the largest publishing houses in the world; and Willy Schlieker, the wheeler-dealer who made his first million as a steel merchant, multiplied his fortune during the Korean War by anticipating the demand for coke to fuel the steel-producing furnaces of the Ruhr, and then became a shipbuilding magnate.

Mavericks like Schlieker caught the public imagination, but they were not typical of the new breed of West Ger-

man businessmen. A survey of the top German industrialists in the 1960s revealed that only 8 per cent were owners of the firms in which they were working; the rest were managers. In the immediate post-war years, a new generation of men in their forties had moved into the important management seats. Like almost everyone else in the 1950s, they worked long hours and often neglected their private lives for the sake of their companies. In part, their diligence may have stemmed from a feeling of insecurity: the taint of having co-operated with the Nazis had undermined the legitimacy of the professional middle classes, and there was a strong

tendency among managers to take on punishing daily routines in their almost fanatical pursuit of wealth and prestige. "Have you recovered?" was the question commonly put to managers returning from holidays.

But West German managers were not—and are not—mere drudges. A large measure of their success was due to their receptivity to new ideas from abroad. A survey conducted a few years ago found that a third of the top men in industry had had working experience abroad, particularly in the United States. Moreover, West German executives tended to be more qualified than their counterparts in other European countries; three quarters of the top managers had a university degree or equivalent, while the figure for the younger men was nearer 90 per cent.

Efficient managership, however, cannot ensure industrial success without the full co-operation of the workers, and therein lies another key aspect of the "economic miracle". During the critical first decade of reconstruction, German trade unions showed unusual restraint in the face of rising prices. Even when their country prospered, West German workers were rarely intransigent. For example, a particularly strike-torn period in Europe was from 1972 to 1973, but in the Federal Republic during this time strike action cost only 14 days per 1,000 employed persons, compared to 94 days in the Netherlands, 108 in Belgium, 231 in France, 700 in Britain and 1,449 in Italy. Furthermore, the regularity and scale of productivity increases in West German industry were due in no small part to trade union co-operation in the introduction of new technology.

In reality, though, West German trade unions are not quite so docile as



At the weekly livestock auction near Würzburg in Bavaria, a buyer bargains for piglets. Pigs outnumber all other farm animals in West Germany, and consumption of pork is one of the highest in the world: 50 kilograms per person every year.

some of the statistics suggest. Their pay restraint in the early post-war years was, to some extent, the result of a chronic fear of inflation—something deeply ingrained in all German workers old enough to remember the catastrophic collapse of the mark in 1923. It can also be explained by the fact that their modest wage demands were balanced by strong bargaining for better working conditions and social benefits that greatly improved the living standards of their members.

Later, the unions ignored the task of strengthening the factory organization and avoided stoppages over local or material issues for a different reason: they were aiming for wider political power. Until 1952, the unions hoped that support for the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the Christian Socialist wing of the CDU would enable them to achieve an ambitious programme of establishing democratic controls over the economy and turning key industries over to public ownership. When the unions realized that

American influence and a consolidation of conservative forces in West Germany would deny them their goals, it was too late to turn to a policy of militant strike action. By then, the 1952 Works Constitution Law had been enacted. It circumscribed the powers of trade union officials, forbidding them to initiate strike action and committing them to maintain company secrets.

At the same time, union power was enhanced by legislation that gave workers one-third representation on the board of directors of all companies with 20 or more employees, plus a works council to protect employees' rights. This concept of "social partnership" was favoured by the key groups within the trade union movement; indeed, it had general appeal in a country where so many people remembered that the Nazis had come to power by exploiting not only the differences between organized labour and employers, but also those within the three pre-war trade union organizations.

Today, various factors discourage trade union extremism in West Germany. Closed shops are illegal. Political strikes are *verboten*. The unions are required by law to exhaust all other means of reaching a solution before calling a strike. A ballot of all members directly affected by an issue must show a three-quarters majority before strike action can be taken. And strikes are illegal during the lifetime of a collective contract. But these factors alone do not explain West Germany's impressively low strike record. In essence, that record is a reflection of German commonsense, of traditional respect for order, authority and efficiency. "Why kill the cow you are milking?" was the question posed by trade union leaders in response to demands by militants

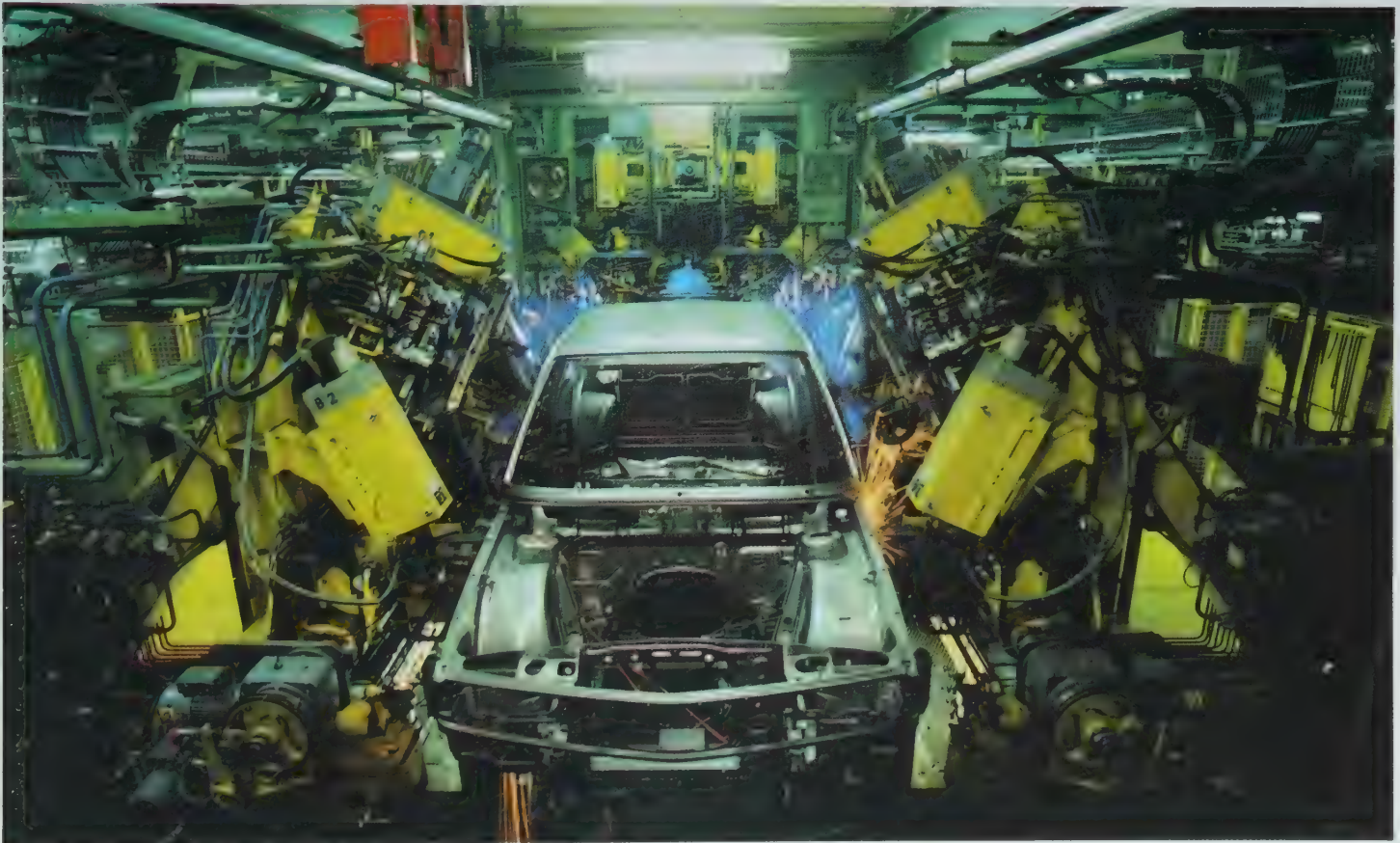
during the seemingly endless years of economic growth and ever-greater benefits from the welfare state.

Meanwhile, the long-running boom presented employers with a novel problem: how to find enough workers to exploit the continuing potential for industrial expansion. In 1961, there were 500,000 job vacancies in West Germany and only 180,000 people unemployed. The economy was as vigorous as ever, and so the Federal Republic increased its efforts to recruit *Gastarbeiter* ("guest workers") from abroad. Already it had job recruiting

agreements with Italy, Spain and Greece. Now it concluded an agreement that allowed the Federal Labour Office to set up job recruiting offices in Turkey. At that time—the year when the Berlin Wall sealed off the main source of extra labour—no one could be expected to foresee that, 20 years later West Germany would have 1.3 million unemployed and, to everyone's embarrassment, a foreign population of 4.6 million, including more than 1.5 million Turks.

It was not until the recession of 1966–67 that West Germany's specta-

cular post-war growth came to an end. Three years earlier Erhard had succeeded Adenauer as Chancellor. The recession—to some extent the result of over-generous spending by his government—now proved that he had not, after all, found some magic formula for endless, trouble-free growth; indeed, Erhard's free market policy of limited government intervention had to be abandoned. In 1966, the Erhard administration was succeeded by a grand coalition of the CDU/CSU and the SDP, which attempted to counter the recession by a greater degree of econ-



Working round the clock on the assembly line of a BMW factory in lower Bavaria, robots weld the components of an automobile body. Automation plays an increasing part in West Germany's engineering industries: over 15,000 robots were in operation by the early 1980s.

MINERS' GUILDS : A RICH LODE OF TRADITION



A miner carries home his pick and lamp.



St. Barbara's image surmounts hammers.



Guild members support the miners' arms.



Clasped hands symbolize solidarity.



A banner shows Gneisenau's pithead.

Every year on the 4th of December, the feast day of St. Barbara, patron saint of miners, West German coalminers don full-dress uniforms and plumed helmets, and march to church in formal processions. They carry the picks and pitlamps symbolic of their trade (*above*) and display elaborately decorated banners (*left and right*), treasured relics of the guilds that were formed in the mid-1800s to provide support for miners who were sick or injured and to fight for improved working conditions and better wages.

These small, local associations were the precursors of the single central trade union that today negotiates for the entire energy industry. But the original guilds live on as historic institutions with a loyal membership and a strong sense of tradition. Some 20,000 miners, working and retired, belong to more than 200 guilds representing the potash, iron ore and salt miners as well as workers in the coalfields of the Ruhr and other mining districts.



A miner is framed by a wreath of leaves.

omic policy planning and by increased public expenditure, especially on the railway network, road building and postal services. The new government was granted greater financial powers by parliament, economic forecasting was taken more seriously, and regional aid programmes were extended—most notably in the economically depressed Ruhr, where the entire coal mining industry was reorganized with new capital to enable its survival in the oil age.

For several years, the West German economy flourished anew—even though the rate of inflation and the budget deficit increased. Then, in 1973, came a huge rise in oil prices, which was to be followed by another great increase in 1978–79. West Germany, as a major importer of oil, was hit especially hard. The growing problems of industry were reflected in the falling rates of investment and in the increasing success of foreign competitors, particularly Japan, in the West German market. By 1982, the budget deficit had risen in one decade from a level equivalent to 18.2 per cent of the GNP to 31.3 per cent. And that same year, when unemployment was approaching a record two million, the inability of the country's political leaders to agree on a strategy for economic growth precipitated the collapse of the 13-year-old coalition led by its long-serving Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt.

These economic problems were not peculiar to the Federal Republic. All Western industrial countries were facing increasing competition from the Far East, and all had to cope with the effects of expensive energy. West Germany—despite the instinctive angst of so many of its citizens—had coped better than many others. Without significant oil reserves, the country would

probably never again enjoy the same level of growth. On the other hand, with its highly advanced technology, its efficiently organized industry, and its wide experience of fighting inflation, West Germany promised to retain a reasonably stable, if not always flourishing, economy.

During the 1960s it was not unusual to hear West Germans assert—sometimes with pride, sometimes with a touch of patronage—that a second German miracle was being achieved: the “economic miracle” of the GDR. By 1970 that assertion was an indisputable fact. East Germany had become the 10th strongest industrial nation in the world and, economically, the unchallenged leader of the Soviet bloc. Incredibly, the country was producing more than the whole of pre-war Germany, which had had a population four times greater; and its production per head was almost one and a half times that of the Soviet Union. Czechoslovakian statisticians calculated that living standards in the GDR were more than 50 per cent higher than in the Soviet Union; and every day, in East Berlin, Soviet soldiers could be seen ogling window displays of consumer goods unobtainable at home.

East Germany's economic recovery was not so swift or spectacular as West Germany's. Yet, in its way, it was no less a *Wirtschaftswunder*, because it was achieved in the face of greater odds. The GDR was fundamentally handicapped from the start. First, its territory, the most industrialized part of pre-war Germany, was not rich in its natural resources, except for huge deposits of brown coal (lignite) and mineral salts. In 1938, it mined only 1.9 per cent of Germany's bituminous coal and

only 6 per cent of the nation's iron ore; and after 1945 it was cut off from its main sources of raw materials in western Germany. Moreover, while East Germany as a whole had suffered less war damage than West Germany, its loss in industrial capacity was infinitely greater as a result of Soviet reparations.

Soviet dismantling reduced the industrial capacity of East Germany by an estimated 45 per cent, as opposed to the 8 per cent lost in the Western zones of occupation. And the dismantling damaged the morale of the work force—especially when, as sometimes happened, plants were dismantled by the Soviets, laboriously rebuilt by the Germans, and then dismantled again. Dismantled plants were transported by rail and sea and reassembled in the Soviet Union, where shortages of skilled labour often condemned them to stand idle for years. Recognizing the wastage, the Soviets went over to appropriating the production of GDR factories. Firms representing 30 per cent of East German industrial capacity were taken over, including all major chemical plants, 80 per cent of potash production and mining, and 40 per cent of steel-making. Between 1945 and 1953, the Soviet Union took an average 25 per cent of the East German GNP without any compensation.

The Soviet hegemony also hindered reconstruction by forcing the GDR to rebuild its economy in line with Stalin's aim of completely eliminating dependence on imported goods. As a member of Comecon, the organization created by Stalin as a counterweight to the Organization for European Economic Cooperation, East Germany was obliged to develop an indigenous iron and steel industry at the expense of its more traditional and well-established

At the Krupps factory in Essen in the Ruhr, newly made locomotive wheels glow in the gloom as the steel cools. Munitions makers since the mid-1800s, Krupps now produces machinery for the chemicals industry and components for nuclear generators, as well as railway equipment.



sources of income. Moreover, the members of Comecon were unsuitable trading partners for the GDR since most of them had underdeveloped, agriculture-based economies that could offer neither sizeable markets for East German goods nor a differentiated range of articles for import into the GDR. And while the Western zones got free imports from the U.S. in the Marshall Aid programme, the GDR had to contend with the unfavourable prices set for its imports and exports by the Soviet Union. In these circumstances, it was no wonder that more and more East Germans fled to the west, further weakening the economy.

How then was the GDR's strong growth rate achieved? Progress was possible when the Russians belatedly realized that the GDR, with its highly skilled, under-utilized work force and its long-established industrial base, was ideally qualified to be the "machine shop" of Eastern Europe. In

1953, the Soviet Union returned to East Germany more than 200 industrial plants that it had taken over to supply reparations. Subsequently, expansion was especially marked in the chemical industry, heavy engineering and optical goods, and soon the member states of Comecon came to depend on the GDR for chemical products, sophisticated machinery, tools and precision instruments.

But East Germany's economic recovery really dates from 1961. That year the building of the Berlin Wall ended the steady loss of skilled workers to the west. At the same time, the GDR was beginning to reap the harvest of its massive investment in education, with the emphasis on practical and technical subjects. A new generation of technically qualified cadres was emerging. The work force was further strengthened by an ever-increasing number of female workers. Some 70 per cent of women between the ages of 16 and 60

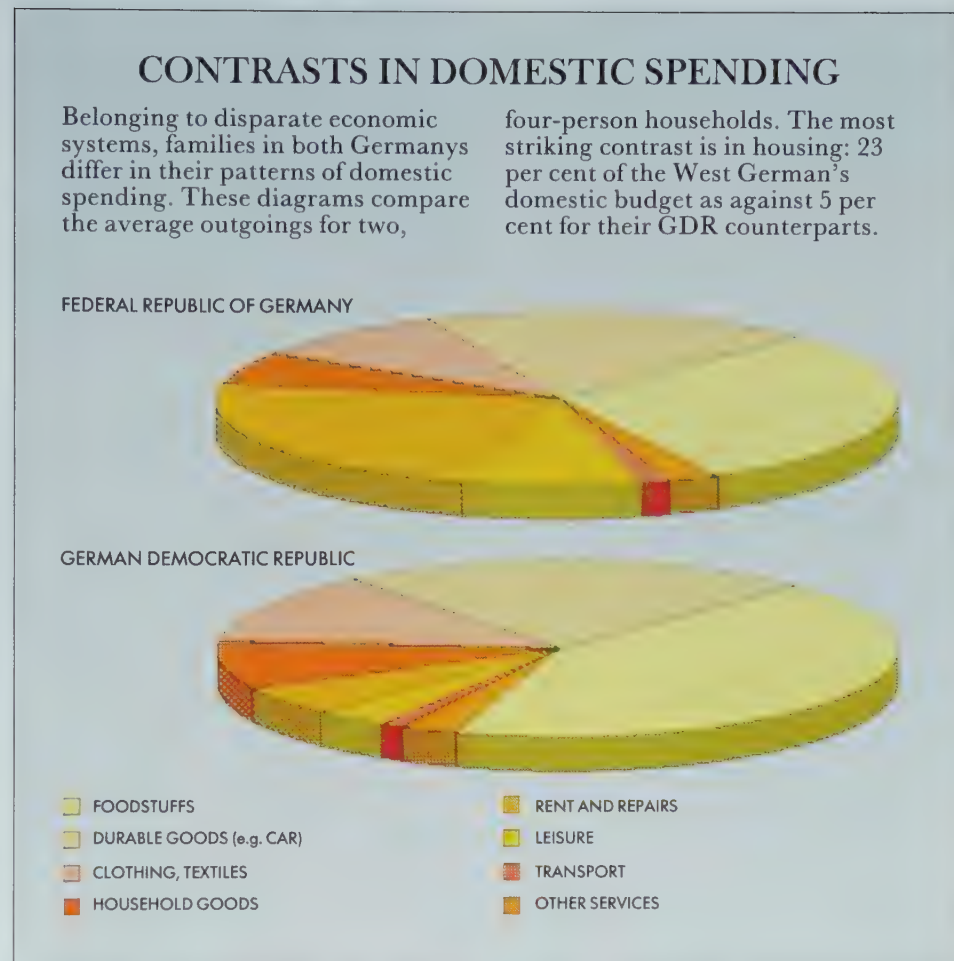
went out to work, and by the 1980s, the number was to increase, incredibly, to almost 90 per cent: 4.1 million women out of a total work force of 8.3 million.

From the beginning, of course, state ownership was made the central element of the GDR economic system. The Soviet Military Administration had barely been set up in Germany when, in June 1945, the Red Army ordered the confiscation of bank assets and the closing of all banks. The next significant step was the expropriation without compensation of all land-holdings of more than 100 hectares, plus all holdings whose owners were judged to be Nazi activists and war criminals. More than 3 million hectares were confiscated. One third of this land was administered by local authorities; the rest (some 2.1 million hectares) was distributed to half a million farm labourers, industrial workers, and peasants and refugees from former German territories in the east.

The land reform, which had considerable popular appeal, instantly eliminated the *junker* (great landowners) as an élite group. The following year it was the turn of the industrialists to come under attack. On June 30, 1946, the people of the state of Saxony were called upon to decide in a plebiscite whether or not to nationalize "those firms and enterprises which profited from the war or are owned by Nazi criminals, active Nazis or war profiteers". There was a 77.7 per cent vote in favour, and the Soviets decided that this one *Land* result reflected opinion throughout the Soviet zone. Consequently, some 10,000 businesses were nationalized; and, a few years later, many more private enterprises were squeezed out of business by a new, state-owned trading organization whose shops, often given priority in the delivery of supplies, came to dominate the retail market.

The last sector of the economy to undergo major reform was agriculture. Between 1952 and 1960, the farms of East Germany were collectivized and termed "agricultural production co-operatives". By the mid-1970s, about one tenth of all farms were directly owned by the state and the rest were state-controlled co-operatives. The only area in which private enterprise still played a sizeable role was handicrafts, where private firms accounted for 60 per cent of total turnover.

Such widespread public ownership has certain benefits. Because the profit motive is no longer the guiding principle for the investment of capital, East Germany is free from the cyclical fluctuations in investment and economic growth that have been experienced in West Germany. In agriculture, collective ownership enables the GDR to



rationalize land use and thus allows technical equipment to be used more cost-effectively than in the Federal Republic. Furthermore, in such an authoritarian state, trade unions enjoy much less independence, their primary role being to support the political and economic goals laid down by the party leadership. As a result, the economy has never suffered from organized strikes, although occasionally there are reports of brief, spontaneous protest

strikes or go-slows in isolated factories.

To be sure, all sovereign states in the Soviet bloc have these economic advantages. The important distinction in the GDR is that many of the problems of state and collective ownership have been avoided by greater flexibility and less dogmatism. For example, in transforming farms into collectives, the authorities were shrewd enough to allow farmers private ownership of sufficient livestock and arable land for their own

personal needs. This cautious approach induced many of the farmers to give their grudging approval to the new system. Similarly, a lack of slavish demand for immediate public ownership characterized the crafts industry, where the continued existence of a large number of private handicrafts enterprises partly compensated for neglect of consumer wishes in official economic policy.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the GDR leadership even made a major conces-

sion to private enterprise by encouraging the development of a number of semi-nationalized companies in which the entrepreneur and the state shared ownership, with the state providing capital. The most famous and successful of these was a fashion-clothing company run by Heinz Bormann, nicknamed "the Red Dior". Bormann's garments were worn by the wives of top GDR functionaries, including the wife of Walter Ulbricht, First Secretary of the SED (1953–71). His clothing ex-

ports brought in so much foreign currency that he was able to silence Party officials—who at one stage told him that his necklines were plunging beyond the bounds of GDR decency—simply by threatening to quit the business. But in 1968, the Czechoslovakian uprising unnerved GDR leaders and they abandoned such bold experimentation with mixed ownership in industry. By 1972, all semi-nationalized firms, including Bormann's, had been taken over completely by the state.



Soaring aluminium-clad service shafts support prism-shaped blocks of the "HypoHaus", headquarters of a Munich bank. Commissioned to create an alternative to modern office building uniformity, the architects described it as "a caravelle with white sails billowing between silver masts".

The other main feature of the East German economy is central planning of production and exchange of goods: the production level of every firm, the places where its finished goods are to be sold, the prices to be charged for each product are fixed by a multitude of regional and industrial production plans that aim to fulfil the requirements of national two, five or seven-year plans for the economy. The advantage of such planning is that it allows the promulgation of clearly defined targets and priorities for the economy. This has been a major factor behind East Germany's industrial growth. Over long periods, 50 per cent or more of the total investment in the GDR has gone into industry in conformity with national plans.

The disadvantage of central planning lies in its inability to cope with the complexity of economic life. This is particularly true of the GDR, which has the most advanced and complicated economy within the Communist bloc. By the time plans come into operation, the preparatory work has often taken so long that the statistical assumptions on which the plans rest are out of date. Moreover, the number of different authorities that are involved makes the co-ordination of the various industrial, regional and individual plans extremely difficult, with the result that shortages and bottlenecks frequently occur.

An old East German joke runs: "Do the Swiss need a Naval Ministry?" "Of course. After all, we have a Ministry for Trade and Supply." Another tells of a customer who enters the Central Department Store on East Berlin's Alexanderplatz and makes his way to the underwear department where he finds all the shelves are bare. "Are you sold

out of underpants here?" he asks. "No," says the sales assistant. "I'm afraid you're at the wrong counter. They're sold out of underpants over there. Here we're sold out of vests."

Queues and shortages are a very real aspect of everyday life in the GDR, but they are not to be viewed as a clear indication of an inferior German economy. In reality, the economies of the two Germanys have advanced at remarkably similar speeds since the 1960s. Of course, there are obvious signs of greater prosperity in the Federal Republic. West German workers, on average, earn almost 40 per cent more than their East German counterparts; some 80 per cent of West German households have a car as opposed to about 40 per cent in the GDR; the average size of West German dwellings is much greater—81 square metres compared with 50 square metres in the east. But such comparisons are in a sense misleading, since they fail to take into account the lower prices and taxation, and the greater equality of wealth, in East Germany.

Quite simply, there are so many variables, east and west, that it is almost impossible to measure one German economy objectively against the other. Too much depends on the observer's point of view. What remains beyond dispute is that the average living standards in both geographical areas of Germany have more than doubled since pre-war times. Remarkably, two sovereign states have achieved extraordinary progress while tackling similar problems with different socio-economic principles. Only one factor is common to both success stories: the tremendous determination and energy of the German people in striving to climb out of the abyss of "Hour Zero".



The tallest structure in eastern Europe, East Berlin's slender 365-metre-high telecommunications tower dominates the main square, the Alexanderplatz. Visible from most of Berlin, the tower was built in 1965 as showpiece and symbol of the GDR's economic revival.

5





Dressed in medieval costume, a chubby-faced Bavarian turns a roasting pig on a spit at a historical pageant in the ancient city of Landshut. Over 500 folk festivals take place in Germany every year.

A ZEST FOR LIFE'S PLEASURES

An old joke, originally told by easy-going southern Germans at the expense of dour, diligent Saxons, describes the events after a funeral. A young man, clutching an urn, says to his mother: "Shall I put grandfather's ashes on the mantelpiece?" "Certainly not," the mother replies. "Grandfather's ashes will go in the hourglass. We Saxons must always work you know." The joke is at the same time prideful and self-mocking. Germans in general—not only Saxons—have long enjoyed an international reputation for being hard, efficient workers.

Now, though, the image is changing. The great majority have come to scorn the notion that work automatically takes precedence over the pursuit of personal pleasure. The shift in attitudes was spotlighted in 1982 by a major survey conducted by Hamburg's Leisure Research Institute. It found that work—in competition with family, leisure and friendship—came a shocking fourth in West German priorities; only eight years earlier, work had topped an identical poll. More shocking still, half the under-30s interviewed claimed that they would prefer to have more leisure time to more money. It was as if the German people had decided that they had achieved a sufficiently high standard of living, and that it was time to stop and enjoy some of the fruits of the *Wirtschaftswunder*.

Quite simply, Germany's steady rise in industrial productivity has brought

not only an enormous increase in living standards but also a marked decrease in the labour needed to maintain those standards. Following the automation and computerization of industry, West Germans are enjoying a relatively short working week: an average of 36 hours—that is, two hours less than Britain and four hours less than their Swiss neighbours. Moreover, they have at least 10 national and religious holidays every year (as many as 14 in some predominantly Catholic *Länder*), and every worker has a legal claim to a minimum of three weeks' paid vacation. In fact, more than 90 per cent of West German workers now have more than four weeks' holiday a year, and 50 per cent claim more than five weeks.

Of course, West Germany's combination of affluence and leisure time scarcely came as a revelation to her European neighbours: for years this had been evident by virtue of German mass invasions of Mediterranean holiday resorts. As long ago as 1976, the Federal Republic overtook the United States—a country with a population four times greater—in its annual total of citizens travelling abroad. West Germans have since become firmly established as the world's most inveterate tourists. Every year more than half of the population takes a holiday in a foreign country. Austria, Spain, Italy, France, Yugoslavia and Greece are the most popular destinations, and, year by year, an increasing number travel to

In the early morning, only basket chairs inhabit a beach on the Frisian island of Sylt, the most northerly point of West Germany. The high-backed seats shelter holidaymakers from the strong winds that sweep the flat North Sea coastal region.

far-flung corners of other continents.

Moreover, after taking a three-week holiday abroad (three weeks is the length of time most favoured for enjoying a complete change of environment and acquiring a well-finished sun-tan), West Germans usually have a week or two remaining for a second holiday, at home or in a neighbouring country. There are many options: a beach holiday on the North Sea, hiking in Bavaria, camping in the Black Forest, winter sports in the Alps or Harz mountains. However, relatively few West Germans choose to take an extended holiday in East Germany. "It is not very good value for our marks," says a young business executive from Hamburg. "Anyway, we have so many other places to think about. It's strange: towns like Zwickau and Cottbus, which were once a familiar part of every German's geography, are stranger to me than Nairobi and Katmandu."

In the GDR, the growth of leisure time has not been quite so dramatic. On average, the East German worker has a 43.75-hour working week, and 18 days' holiday every year. More holi-

days are usually granted to long-serving employees. People employed in a three-shift system, and mothers in full-time employment with two or more children under 16, work only 40 hours a week. Those on shiftwork (some 40 per cent of the industrial work force) get a minimum holiday of 20 working days. There are also four national holidays, and three religious holidays—two days for Christmas and one day for Whitsun.

According to the holiday section of a GDR government handbook: "Travel broadens the mind, a change of climate is good for the constitution." In reality, only a tiny fraction of the population—excluding old-age pensioners—has an opportunity to take a holiday outside the Eastern bloc. Within the GDR, however, most workers are eligible for heavily subsidized vacations arranged by the holiday service of the Confederation of Free German Trade Unions (FDGB). Under this system, families can spend a standard 13 days at a state-controlled resort—usually on the Baltic coast, in the unspoilt southern highlands or the Harz mountains—for about a third of the real cost. Similarly,

low cost holidays are provided by more than 500 state-run camping sites and some 250 youth hostels.

The main drawback for East German holidaymakers is not the price but availability. The FDGB, for example, has 8.8 million members, but its facilities can cater for fewer than two million people every year. Even a worker with sufficient seniority to be sure of an allotted place is rarely able to decide his own destination. Heinrich Müller, for example, is the foreman of a shift of 600 coal miners; with more than 25 years' service behind him, he is entitled to 36 days' vacation every year. He explains: "I have been to workers' hotels and holiday camps all over the country, and on the Black Sea coast of Rumania. Every year we list our preferences, but the trade union organizers decide where they'll send us. Everybody can't go to the seashore at the same time. So we might apply for the Baltic and find we are going to Spreewald instead. But anyway, wherever we go, we usually get excellent food and board."

Statistics show that in both Germanys there is a preference for seaside



Shaded by tall trees, a rustic holiday chalet (above, left) is a perquisite of a type enjoyed only by a small number of high-ranking GDR officials. An ultramodern hotel (above), subsidized by the trade unions, is more typical vacation accommodation for the majority of East German families.



holidays and group activity holidays. East and West Germans have the same tendency to work hard at enjoying their vacations, quite reasonably regarding such leisure time as far too valuable to be squandered through lack of organization or forward planning. Even when Germans do not travel in a party, they are likely to form small groups soon after their arrival. Characteristically, too, many German holidaymakers are very quick to stake out their own territory—perhaps going out before breakfast and leaving a towel to reserve a pool-side chair or lay claim to a desirable patch of beach.

Until a few years ago, it was common practice—especially at the traditionally popular North Sea resorts—to

mark territorial possession with a *Sandburg*, a huge sandcastle that bears more resemblance to a field fortification than a child's moat-and-turret creation. Essentially, this “castle” consists of a thick wall of sand, as much as 1 metre high, often decorated with seashells, and always large enough to encompass most members, if not all, of the family. In the years between the World Wars, it was not unusual for such ramparts to declare a family's affiliations by flying the black, red and gold flag of republicans or the black, white and red flag of monarchists. Alas, such energetic creativity has now been banned from many beaches following complaints from weekend trippers who could not find space to stretch out in the sun,

and—more influentially—from local traders who objected that *Sandburgen* were seriously reducing the hiring of the *Strandkörbe*, traditional high-back basket chairs big enough to shelter two people from the wind, rain or sun.

Customs are changing so fast that it is no longer reasonable to generalize about the behaviour patterns of German holidaymakers. For example, a new breed of West German tourist has been encountered at most European resorts: studiously unorganized young men and women, so casual in manner and dress that they make nonsense of the old image of the German tourist as someone aggressive and assertive in his pursuit of pleasure. Nevertheless, the fact remains that this old image—or

fear of the image—is still so strong that West German governments periodically launch campaigns urging politeness and circumspection upon those millions who have become the country's unofficial roving ambassadors. A few years ago, it took the form of a list of "Golden Rules" printed inside Federal passports. The rules included the instructions: "Don't deny the fact that your parentage is German, but see to it that the foreigner is pleasantly surprised by it." And they concluded with the stern admonition: "If you are of the foolish opinion that everything outside Germany is worse, stay at home. If you think that outside Germany all things are better, don't come back."

In the Federal Republic the leisure explosion has by no means been limited to holidays abroad. At home, there has been a growth in leisure activity on a scale unimaginable even a generation ago. The boom began in the 1960s when billions of marks were spent by Federal, state and local government in a concerted effort to provide more and improved recreational amenities: sports grounds, gymnasia, swimming pools and thousands of community centres with facilities for everything from ballroom dancing to basketball. Since then the number of sports clubs in the Federal Republic has risen to more than 50,000 with a total membership exceeding 15 million—or almost a quarter of the entire population. Association Football (soccer) clubs have the largest membership, followed by those for gymnastics, tennis, rifle-shooting, athletics, handball, swimming, table-tennis, riding and skittles.

This enormous membership is not only a reflection of the widespread

availability of sporting facilities but also of the German penchant for club activities. "When two Germans meet, they shake hands," runs an old saying. "But when three meet, they form a club." Indeed, about 40 per cent of the West German population belong to a club of some kind. For example, there are 14,500 choral clubs with a total membership of more than 1.5 million; clubs by the thousand for dog breeders, pigeon racers, stamp collectors, theatre-goers and, indeed, for aficionados of every conceivable hobby.

The club habit in Germany is a very old one. For example, the *Schützenverein*—rifle clubs common all over the country—go back several centuries, and they still retain something of the air of medieval guilds with their ceremonial gatherings, their banners and badge-decorated uniforms. The majority are for men only, and membership of a rifle club can convey considerable prestige within a community. There is no doubt that members spend more time lifting their beer glasses than their rifles. However, each *Schützenverein* does hold an annual shooting competition to find out who is the best marksman. The prize is the decorated target used for the final rounds, and invariably the victor will mount it high on the outside wall of his house for all to see.

Equally prestigious are the *Freiwillige Feuerwehr*, local volunteer fire brigades, formed in rural communities to deal with outbreaks of fire not large enough to necessitate calling professional firemen from the nearest large town. In its way, each brigade is a kind of club; its fire engine is provided by the state, but the members, all unpaid, buy their own uniforms and, as well as taking part in regular training drills, they arrange various social events

throughout the year, culminating in a grand parade. In some areas this is combined with the *Schützenverein* shoot-out and inevitably ends with an alfresco feast and much swilling of beer.

Drinking, in fact, is a major feature of club life in Germany. A whole sub-culture of clubs and semi-clubs exists around the public bar-room institution of the *Stammtisch*. A *Stammtisch* is, literally, "a table reserved for regular guests", but more generally the term is applied to any drinking fraternity that meets regularly. Such fraternities originated with the 19th-century trade guilds that used to meet to arrange deals and trading regulations; now they take various forms, ranging from informal political meetings to small groups of *Gasthaus* regulars sitting down at their own table to play *Skat*—Germany's national card game, a kind of three-handed whist with rules so exquisitely complicated that they might have been designed to keep outsiders away. *Stammtische* are almost entirely for men, and about 20 per cent of West Germany's adult male population belong to at least one. Exclusion does not seem to bother their womenfolk: a few years ago, a survey found that 43 per cent of *Stammtisch* "widows" were thankful to have their homes to themselves from time to time.

Clubs are an even more integral part of life in East Germany. Partly as a result of the state's distrust of anything resembling private enterprise, virtually every activity requires membership of an association, and those clubs that are not directly controlled by the Communist Party itself will often come under the authority of a trade union. Such control does have some advantages—most notably in sport. The GDR leadership regards success in

A SUPER-EFFICIENT NURSERY OF SPORT

international sport as an invaluable boost to East German morale at home and prestige abroad. Therefore it makes sport compulsory in schools, colleges and universities, and it spares neither time nor expense in developing young talent. By such single-mindedness the GDR has created a sporting élite with a standing in international competition far beyond the reasonable expectation of a 17-million population. But success is bought at a price. Training is so concentrated that it displaces ordinary schooling, and those who fail to fulfil early athletic promise can find themselves handicapped in their pursuit of a non-sporting occupation.

A massive increase in sport at all levels is one major aspect of leisure activity that East and West Germany have in common. Another is the sustained popularity of the performing arts: plays, opera, ballet, orchestral concerts. In the Federal Republic, more than 80 orchestras and concert halls are now subsidized by city or state. Of approximately 300 theatres, only about a fifth are privately owned; the rest, each with a permanent ensemble, are subsidized by the *Länder* or municipality and regarded as a community service. Per head of population, East Germany has even more theatres and concert halls, all owned and very substantially financed by the state.

In both Germanys—as in all countries where television has mesmerized the masses—the small screen has partially eclipsed the large. Between 1956 and 1976, the period of most dramatic decline, the number of West German cinemas fell from 6,438 to 3,100 and yearly attendance from more than 820 million to a mere 115 million. Similarly, though less dramatically, GDR cinema attendance fell in the same



A gymnast balances on parallel bars.

In the course of a few decades, the GDR has become a nation of athletic champions. The East Germans first made an impact on a global scale in the 1976 Olympics, when they won 40 gold medals, more than any other country except the U.S.S.R. Since then, they have become the most formidable contenders in the world of international athletics.

The GDR's phenomenal sporting success is not the result of lavish expenditure on facilities and training. The state actually spends less on sport per person than the Federal Republic. Far more significant is the single-minded determination with which it organizes and promotes sporting activities and nurtures talent.

Since 1951, sport has been compulsory in all GDR schools, colleges and universities. A four-year-old at kindergarten participates in games or physical education every day. By the age of six, a budding gymnast or swimming champion will be encouraged to compete in local contests. Once at secondary school, most children take part in extra-curricular games and classes, organized by voluntary coaches.

Underpinning the encouragement of sport through education is its promotion by the powerful German Gymnastics and Sports Union (DTSB). Through regional branches and affiliations with trade union societies and the 35 specialist associations for particular sports, the DTSB controls about 10,000 clubs and training facilities nationwide. It now has 3.5 million members—one fifth of the population.

The efficiency of the GDR sports machine, headed by a secretariat that supervises research and development, ensures that young promising athletes are guided expertly through the system. The most talented win a place in one of 20 special sports schools. These institutions usually take students at

13, though specialist education for gymnasts can begin as early as six.

The DTSB also runs specialist clubs for other promising athletes. Membership is by recommendation only, and the clubs assume responsibility for training and also take an interest in the member's education and career prospects.

Critics of the East German sports system claim that state interest and attention is concentrated on the small minority who are likely to reach Olympic standard. But the GDR is also committed to promoting sports activity for the masses too. Approximately four million East Germans of all ages hold the GDR Sports Badge, an award for all-round physical fitness and sporting skills whose motto is: "Ready for Work and for the Defence of our Homeland". The right of every citizen to participate in sport and physical exercise is enshrined in the Constitution and in the Labour Code. School-leavers are encouraged to keep up their sporting interests and general fitness in the workplace by entering competitions—such as the Most Athletic Girl Apprentice, with over 400,000 entries in one year.

The state's dedication to the dual aim of individual excellence and mass participation in sport is expressed in a huge, two-part sporting event held at Leipzig every two years: the Gymnastics and Sports Festival and the Spartakiad Games for Children and Youth. The Festival includes contests and activities for all ages and levels of ability, and has more than 70,000 participants. But the greatest interest focuses on the Spartakiad, a testing ground for ambitious athletes, in which 12,000 13 to 18-year-olds compete. The winners are the élite of their age group—future Olympic contenders. But in the two years leading up to Leipzig, nine out of 10 young East Germans participate in local Spartakiads. Almost four million enter qualifying heats; more than a million reach the district finals; and about 100,000 go on to compete in county games.



Strength, grace and symmetry combine in a gymnastics display at the Leipzig Spartakiad Games.



period from 300 million to about 80 million a year. But in neither country has there been a comparable decline in theatre-going. Each year more than 17 million West Germans and 10 million East Germans attend the theatre.

In East Germany, the sustained popularity of the theatre is easily explained: with ticket prices frozen since the 1950s, the live theatre represents wonderful value for money. In West Germany, the explanation lies partly with the old penchant for clubs and organized activity. Most theatregoers do not buy their tickets at the box office but attend as members of subscription clubs. Under this effective system, members book in advance for an entire season made up of about 10 to 12 different productions; and, in some theatres, the subscribers make up as much as 90 percent of the audience. The oldest and largest of these subscription organizations—the *Volksbühne* ("People's Stage"), founded in 1890 and originally connected with the labour movement—has 100 area branches and about 250,000 members, mainly drawn from the working class.

One other important feature of the leisure scene is shared by the two Germans: a wealth of cultural attractions scattered so widely about the land that there is something of value in reach of every citizen. In West Germany, there are 1,500 museums; great opera houses in West Berlin, Munich, Stuttgart, Frankfurt, Cologne, Hamburg and Düsseldorf; outstanding ballet companies at Stuttgart, Munich and Hamburg; important arts festivals held in West Berlin (jazz), Würzburg (Mozart), Bonn (Beethoven), Bayreuth (Wagner), and—less predictably—in the highly industrial town of Recklinghausen, home of the widely acclaimed

Ruhr Festival, which is organized each year by the German Trade Union Federation. The GDR, too, has a staggering number of galleries and museums, ranging from great national collections in East Berlin, Weimar, Potsdam, Dresden and Leipzig to the local *Heimatmuseum* that is to be found in almost every small town.

Such polycentrism—largely the legacy of centuries when Germany was a mosaic of principalities and duchies, sovereign states and free cities—accounts for the richness of Germany's cultural life. Combined with the ancient Teutonic love of a good beanfeast, it also explains the survival of so many traditional festivals that have been a major feature of German society since the Middle Ages. There are literally thousands of festivals in Germany. They range from village feast-days to elabor-

ate civic displays of organized chaos; and the latter—staged mainly in the Rhineland and Bavaria during a three-month carnival season that climaxes in millions of citizens abandoning themselves to a five-day orgy of merry-making and uninhibited tomfoolery—provide perhaps the most striking picture of the Germans hard at play.

Most German festivals have a religious origin, and inevitably those areas which remained Catholic during and after the Reformation tended to retain more festivals than those areas that embraced less ostentatious Protestantism. But that is not to say that German Protestants became strongly averse to sudden outbreaks of self-indulgence. Indeed, a popular old couplet—*Who loves not woman, wine and song Remains a fool his whole life long*—has been attributed to none other than Martin Luther himself. The

attribution is somewhat mischievous; there is absolutely no evidence to suggest that the fierce old heretical monk ever penned anything so frivolous. What matters is that Lutherans rather like to think that he did. Few, if any, would want the founder of Protestantism to have been anything so un-German as a stern, unbending Puritan.

In the 15th century, when ascetics criticized Germany's wild and unrestrained pre-lenten revelry, a churchman reasoned in defence that "a wine barrel that is not tapped will surely burst". To this day, his comment remains as good an explanation as any of the extraordinary way millions of Germans—including many upright, seemingly sober-minded citizens—can once a year suddenly cast aside inhibitions and everyday formalities and throw themselves wholeheartedly into the madcap fun of *Karneval*, otherwise known as *Fasching* in Bavaria and *Fastnacht* or *Fasnet* in Baden-Württemberg.

These celebrations are most extravagantly staged in Aachen, Bonn, Cologne, Düsseldorf, Mainz, Munich and Münster, and usually include a huge variety of festive events: masked balls, private parties, pageants, processions, and "Fools' Congresses", at which prizes are awarded for the craziest costumes and funniest speeches. Officially, planning and preparations begin at 11.11 a.m. on the 11th day of the 11th month—a tradition of uncertain origin, possibly derived from pagan celebration of November 11, the day of St. Martin, patron saint of innkeepers and reformed drunkards. Some carnivals are launched as early as the first week in January. But for everybody, the festivities always reach a frenzied, bacchanalian climax in the week before Lent. As tomfoolery on the streets



An ensemble plays to a packed auditorium at the Philharmonie concert hall in West Berlin. Built in 1963, the hall is a masterpiece of acoustic design, with no seat further than 32 metres from the rostrum. West Germany has about 100 permanent professional orchestras.

Garish neon signs advertise sex shows on the main street of Hamburg's red-light district, the Reeperbahn. Prostitution in West Germany is legal and controlled by such means as state-regulated flats, with fixed rents and client charges.

spills over into offices and factories, work gradually grinds to a standstill.

In origin, of course, *Karneval*—a term probably derived from the Latin *carne vale* (“flesh farewell”)—is a Catholic festivity: a period of frivolity and deliberate self-indulgence before the time of fasting. As such, it has never taken hold in the predominantly Protestant north and east of Germany. But the Catholic connection has never discouraged West German Protestants from joining the great final fling. The Rhinelanders have a saying: “Whoever is not foolish at *Karneval* is foolish for the rest of the year.” And therein lies a powerful trigger behind this annual stampede into merriment. Wherever celebrations are held, it is regarded as almost mandatory to cast off dignity and enter into the spirit of the occasion. Anyone showing disapproval is likely to be bombarded with hoots of *Karnevalsmuffel*—“carnival sourpuss”.

By the same token, this is the recognized time for poking fun at authority. In processions, giant Disney-style dummies caricature leading politicians. Satirical speeches lampooning the authorities are delivered by appointed “Fools”. And some carnivals reserve an entire day for women to indulge in acts of defiance. On this day, usually the last Thursday before Lent, women symbolically storm their Town Hall and compel the Mayor to hand over the keys of their city. By custom, they can now do with men as they will, though mainly this involves nothing more menacing than cutting off men's ties with scissors and planting kisses on uniformed policemen or, indeed, anyone in a position of authority.

To be sure, not everyone appreciates the beery, anything-goes humour of these festivities. For example, Helmut



Schmidt, when he was Chancellor, notoriously tried to avoid the devastating tide of merrymaking that surged through the streets of the Federal capital at carnival time. Schmidt came from Hamburg, and, of course, as a northerner, he was expected to be a *Karnevalsmuffel*. But even he was not allowed to dodge completely the cherished chaos of the carnival. One year, when he had planned a timely retreat from Bonn, the women—who were not to be denied their annual act of rebellion—advanced their invasion of the Chancellery and Parliament buildings by 24 hours.

Karneval does not come cheaply. For instance, in 1982—a year when economic recession had imposed financial restraints—approximately two million Deutsche Marks were lavished on the 6-kilometre, multi-float procession in Cologne. Much of the money came from banks and companies seeking publicity. But many citizens spent over 100 marks on elaborate costumes, and the “Prince of the *Karneval*”—a local

bank manager—was reckoned to have paid out at least 100,000 marks in the course of his ceremonial duties.

Outside Munich and the large Rhineland cities, carnival celebrations are much less extravagant—but some are more pagan, hinting at the pre-Christian rituals from which they probably evolved. In the Black Forest, for example, witches, hobgoblins, sprites and monsters—all wearing terrifying masks—roam noisily through village streets: they are scaring winter away and awakening the new life of spring. There, as throughout West Germany, the noise becomes loudest on Shrove Tuesday (*Faschingsdienstag*) and then, as Ash Wednesday dawns, all traces of carnival vanish. The country settles down to a period of *lenten* calm before Easter launches new celebrations and leads on to a great feast of festivals, ancient and modern.

Easter, in Germany, is largely a children's festival, and its events more domestic than public. In many areas, on the evening of Easter Saturday, chil-

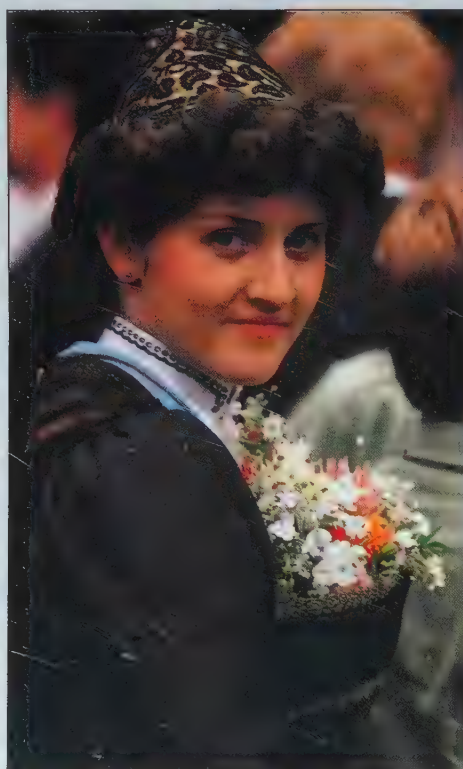
KILLING A DRAGON IN THE FESTIVAL SEASON



An armoured horseman relaxes before a performance of the *Drachenstich* play.



A tuba player stands ready to join a parade.



Flowers decorate a girl's folk costume.

Every August, thousands of visitors gather in the little market town of Furth im Wald, on the edge of the Oberpfalz Forest, to celebrate Bavaria's oldest folk festival, the 16th-century *Drachenstich*.

In common with festivals held all over Germany, the *Drachenstich* (dragon-slaying) has beer-drinking, brass bands and colourful processions; local people wear folk costume and dancers perform by torchlight. What makes this festival unique is the drama of the dragon-spearer itself: a thrilling combat between a heroic knight and a terrifyingly realistic dragon.

The play, a mixture of myth and local history, is set in 15th-century Furth. An enemy lord, the Black Knight, tyrannizes the town and makes unwelcome advances to a beautiful lady at Furth Castle. When a dragon emerges from the Bavarian Forest, the terrified townsfolk flee to the castle for refuge. The lady is about to yield to the evil knight to dissuade him from persecuting the people, when the lord of the castle—the Good Knight—returns from the wars. He captures the Black Knight, slays the dragon and weds the lady.

More than 1,000 residents and some 200 horses take part in the nine-day festival, and there are seven performances of the play—following a tradition that the dragon must be slain seven times.

A new hero and heroine are chosen for each festival from the young men and women of Furth, but many of the other characters are played by the same citizens year after year. These people become strongly identified with their roles, and it is not unusual for a town councillor, for example, to be addressed as Black Knight even when the festival is months away.

For all the human interest in the performance, the real star of the show is the dragon. Built in 1974 at a cost of 80,000 DM, the current model is 18 metres long, 4 metres

wide and 3.5 metres high. For most of the year it is housed in a converted garage behind the town's clock.

The dragon's convincing exterior hides a range of technical gadgets that produce some dramatic special effects. A hydraulics system, powerful enough for a fork-lift truck, moves the monster. Electrical circuits make the wings flap, the body writhe, the tail lash and the huge, clawed feet stamp. As the dragon becomes enraged, the

massive jaws snarl and snap, and clouds of thick smoke, released from smoke canisters, belch from its mouth. Jets of gas are ignited as they burst through the dragon's nostrils, so that it seems to breathe fire. A sound system produces a deep, grumbling roar that can be heard all over the town. When the dragon is finally speared, synthetic blood gushes from its tongue—to the cheers of the crowd and the peal of church bells.



A hotel sign depicts the dragon legend, with Furth Castle in the background.



Crowds line the town square as the Good Knight fights the dragon (*above*). Inside the beast, a driver (*inset*) monitors the action on closed-circuit television and operates a bank of controls for the special effects.

dren are taken to a local bonfire party. The next morning, they receive chocolate rabbits (over 60 million are sold every year in West Germany alone), and they search home or garden to find a nest of Easter eggs hidden overnight by the *Osterhase*—the “Easter Hare”. Again in many parts of the country, ancient customs linger on: in Hamburg, for example, bonfires are lit to welcome the arrival of spring, and villagers in Westphalia and the Black Forest roll flaming wheels down hillsides—a tradition based on the ancient belief that if the wheels keep alight to the bottom of the hill, a good harvest will follow.

The next festival in the crowded German calendar is a local one, entirely based on ancient superstition. This is *Walpurgisnacht* on the eve of May 1, the day of St. Walpurga, an eighth-century protector against magic. On this night, according to legend, the Devil gathers his witches and warlocks together for an annual feast on the 1,140-metre peak of the Brocken—North Germany’s highest mountain. At the beginning of this century, a new-founded Walpurgis Society inaugu-

rated an annual festival, involving a feast, dancing and fireworks. After World War II, when the Brocken fell into the GDR half of the Harz Mountains, the celebrations became restricted to socialist witches. West Germans, however, were reluctant to lose a good festival, and so they shifted their Walpurgis Night—redesigned as a children’s Halloween-style party—to the western side of the mountain range. No one doubted that the Devil could arrange to be in two places at once.

Walpurgis Night is one example of how the division of Germany has widened an already vast range of German festivals. In the case of May Day, otherwise known as Labour Day, a festival common to both republics has developed along different lines. In the west, this public holiday is primarily devoted to political rallies and to countless fairs, fêtes and balls organized in many instances by trade unions, while, in the rural south, traditional festivities often centre round a 9 to 12-metre tall maypole. In East Germany, May Day is made of sterner stuff: most notably an awesome parade in East

Berlin of tanks and missiles, and columns of grim-faced troops, who goose-step by in jackboots and wear helmets that are art-deco versions of the old Wehrmacht coal-scuttle.

In the Federal Republic—and especially in the Catholic south—May Day opens the floodgates to thousands of folk festivals and parish fairs, organized by the local communities and the various clubs that exist to preserve traditional dress, dances and customs. Most of these festivals last a full weekend. Many include firework displays, and some celebrate legends and folk stories—for example, in the town of Hamelin, a re-enactment of the tale of the Pied Piper and, at Furth im Wald, a replay of the killing of a fiery, 15th-century dragon. And essential to the success of almost all these summer festivities are a lively brass band and an inexhaustible supply of cold beer and hot sausages.

In the autumn, wine festivals come to the fore; throughout the wine-growing districts, there are concerts, firework displays, dances and non-stop



Members of a shooting club pass round a rack of beer to toast the winner of their annual competition. After a match, a target (right) may be inscribed with the name of the top marksman and given as a trophy. About one million West Germans belong to shooting societies.



At Mönchen-Gladbach, fans cheer on their team at a local match. Football is the most popular spectator sport in West Germany, and the Football Federation, with about four million members, is the largest specialist sports association in the world.



pouring of wine—in some cases, the wine comes directly from a village fountain. But wine drinking soon pales into insignificance by comparison with the alcoholic haze that surrounds the *Oktoberfest* in Munich—a famous orgy of feasting and beer drinking (at least 4.5 million litres are consumed) that obliterates 16 days from the Bavarian calendar every year. For the sheer concentration of over-indulgence, Germany has nothing to compare with the *Oktoberfest*. Curiously, the festival actually takes place in September, but since few of its participants have returned to reality until the following month, its name seems to be a reasonable example of drinker's licence.

It is perhaps as well that the remaining festivals of the year are of a more solemn and serious kind. On October 31, Reformation Day, Protestants commemorate Luther's nailing of his 95 theses to the church door at Wittenberg. Catholics remember their saints on November 1, All Saints' Day, and the following day, All Souls' Day, they remember their dead. On *Volkstrauertag* ("People's Sorrow Day"), two Sundays before Advent, services are held in remembrance of those who died in the wars; and one week later, on *Totensonntag* ("Sunday of the Dead"), Protestants visit family graves. Then, on the following Sunday, children eagerly begin to mark off their Advent calendars in the countdown to Christmas.

In Germany, the Feast of St. Nicholas falls on December 6, and the previous evening children leave out their shoes or stockings for the saint to fill with fruits, nuts and sweets. At this time, most towns and villages hold Christmas bazaars, the biggest and the best being staged for four weeks in the main square of Nuremberg. At almost

every bazaar, St. Nicholas appears in person, white-bearded and red-robed and often accompanied by a strange, black-faced servant, known as Ruprecht or Krampus, who sometimes carries a big stick with which he pretends to mete out punishment to ill-behaved children. During Advent, St. Nicholas is also to be found in large department stores; he may even be seen sitting in a shop window beside a telephone—his "hotline" to young passers-by who can dictate their orders from the street.

After long resistance, Germany, like other Western countries, has fallen prey to the strident commercialization of Christmas. It was inevitable, really, in the light of the new-won prosperity; and especially so in the Federal Republic, where most of the employees now receive a hefty Christmas bonus, often amounting to an extra month's salary. Nevertheless, in Germany, both east and west, Christmas remains a very dutifully observed religious festival; a time when *Gemütlichkeit* strongly prevails over the people. This word translates simply as comfort or cosiness, but it has wider connotations—of the

hearthside and deep content, of home cooking and family security.

At this time, Germans cling fondly to old traditions designed to give the season a truly magical air. For example, it remains a popular custom for each household to display its own Advent Wreath, a horizontal circle of fir branches, decorated with ribbons and perhaps gilded fir cones, and bearing four red or gold candles, one being lit for every week of Advent that passes. In decorating the Christmas tree (itself a tradition originating in Germany), many families still insist—despite the fire risk—on affixing real candles. Many, too, display a home-made crib-scene beneath their trees; and many still bake their own Advent biscuits, variably spiced or shaped according to regional custom.

At dusk on Christmas Eve, it is still common practice for parents to ring a tiny silver bell to summon children into the living room to open gifts that have suddenly and mysteriously appeared. There follows a festive meal, traditionally including goose. And finally—if the well-fed family can break away

from television's powerful hold—everyone may go along to a late night church service. It is the only day of the year when churches are packed to overflowing. So many Germans make a rare church appearance that the tiny minority of churchgoers who attend regularly have a name for them: they call them the *Einjährig-Freiwilligen*—“once-a-year volunteers”.

Throughout the year—and most especially at Christmas time—Germans greatly cherish the privacy and security of the home. *Das Heim*—“the home”—is another of those words that time has enveloped in a mist of sentimental associations. Home—whether it be a cramped city apartment or an ancestral farmhouse—is at once a haven from the bustle and stress of the working world, and a place where personal status may be more solid and unthreatened. It is also the place where most Germans spend the greatest amount of their leisure time; and there, east and west, the main pastimes are the same: reading and television.

The average citizen of the GDR is a voracious reader. Even the smallest town will have a well-stocked government bookshop crowded with people carrying the obligatory string shopping-basket and perusing the shelves for something new to read. Although modern bestsellers from Western countries are unavailable, the books are not overwhelmingly propagandist. There are literary classics, inexpensive paperbacks on such topics as medieval poetry or the trial of Dostoevsky, and an impressive range of art books at popular prices. In this respect, the old German maxim, *Gedanken sind frei* (“My thoughts are my own!”), has become especially appropriate for the

East Germans. By finding their own routes through the classics and leading non-fiction, East Germans, young and old, have the opportunity to arrive at philosophical viewpoints independent of state doctrine.

Books are also important in the GDR for economic reasons. Among the major assets inherited by the post-war regime were the great printing presses and publishing houses of Leipzig. This city remains one of the world's greatest publishing centres; its presses, along with those of Dresden and East Berlin, pour out more than 6,000 titles a year for the flourishing home market and for export. East Germans, however, are not so well served by newspapers and magazines. West German publications are banned and all the leading GDR

daily and weekly publications are controlled directly or indirectly by the SED. The biggest daily newspaper, *Neues Deutschland* (circulation about one million), is very politically biased; and at one time it was so lacking in real news that East Germans used to joke that they bought it mainly for wrapping or toilet paper. But that was never quite true. Most GDR newspapers have one very important function: their personal columns for buying and selling provide a valuable marketplace in a country where shortages so often occur. For example, the waiting period for the delivery of a new car is so long that a secondhand car will almost invariably sell within 24 hours of being advertised. Indeed, it may well be sold even before the advertisement ap-



Locals at a Swabian tavern concentrate on a hand of *Skat*, Germany's most popular card game. These players meet on fixed evenings at the same reserved table. Anyone else who joins the game must stand the trio a round of drinks.

pears—snapped up by a member of the newspaper's small-ads staff.

The West Germans, in contrast, have access to a staggering range of newspapers and magazines: about 430 different newspapers, including 385 dailies with a combined circulation of more than 21 million, 43 weekly newspapers, three Sundays, and about 6,570 periodicals with a combined sale of over 250 million. Remarkably, newspaper sales greatly increased in the face of television's challenge. The dramatic advance came after 1952 when the Hamburg publisher, Axel Springer, launched the daily *Bild-Zeitung*. Until then most German dailies were sold only on subscription. *Bild-Zeitung* went out as a street tabloid, achieved a million daily sales in the first year, and was nudging five million by the 1980s. Among periodicals, the great success

stories belong to the brilliantly illustrated *Stern* and to *Der Spiegel*, a news magazine originally modelled on *Time* magazine. The former has remained popular despite its blundering "scoop of the century"—"Hitler's Diaries" in 1983; and *Der Spiegel* has dominated its field for years, achieving a weekly circulation of around one million.

In a national survey, reading has been voted the second most popular pastime in West Germany. In first place, with almost twice as many votes, was television viewing. On average, West Germans now watch two and a quarter hours of television every day, and a top programme will command a home audience of some 30 million—plus millions of East Germans who can tune in without paying one pfennig towards the annual West German television licence fee. There are two national

and nine regional channels in the Federal Republic. All are run by public broadcasting corporations which are independent of the government, non-profit-making, and financed mainly by television licence fees and partly by advertising. Most attractively (for viewers), commercials are not allowed to interrupt programmes. Moreover, advertising time is limited to 20 minutes per day, and commercials may only be broadcast between the hours of 6 and 8 in the evening.

West Germany has one television channel devoted mainly to educational programmes and minority interests; the others cover the broad spectrum of entertainment, from the frivolous to the high-brow, and include a moderate proportion of foreign (mainly American) films and television shows. All the channels pride themselves on a balanced approach to current affairs, with panel discussions and political debates as regular additions to news coverage. And most extraordinarily—at least in the eyes of viewers in the Democratic Republic—television covers sittings of the *Bundestag* (House of Representatives). These broadcasts greatly enhance the public's political awareness; whether it also detracts from the objectivity of parliamentary debate is a matter of unending dispute.

In complete contrast, East German television—also obtainable in the west—is rigidly controlled by the state. It has only two channels but no regional programmes. And although it can be excellent for sport and old films, it is notoriously unbalanced in its presentation of news, current affairs and discussion programmes in general. But no matter. Long ago the SED realized it was impractical to enforce a ban on tuning into the west, and so the East



A prominent hoarding outside a Leipzig shop advertises the first prize in a city council lottery: a new East-German-made Trabant car. Since a wait of up to 10 years for a new car is common in the GDR, this state-run lottery was not short of entrants.





Germans—alone among the peoples of the Soviet bloc—can enjoy the best of two television worlds.

Underpinning most German pleasures, public or private, are the two basic essentials of life—eating and drinking. Germans have long been regarded as prodigious trenchermen—indeed, ever since Tacitus noted their enormous appetites and their ability for making wine and “a beverage drawn from barley or from wheat”. Appetites were further whetted by the bleak years of rationing during and after World War II. The writer Heinrich Böll has described how—during that time of appalling shortages—he craved bread as an addict craves heroin. His anguish was shared by tens of millions of his countrymen, and subsequently many Germans found that a once healthy interest in food had been transformed into an obsession.

In East Germany, memories of those grim post-war years are still kept alive by the sight of queues outside foodshops. Formal rationing finally ended in the GDR in 1962 and no one now goes hungry. On the other hand, few people—excluding the ruling élite—can obtain the quality and variety of food they would like. Significantly, GDR citizens often use the curious term *die Verpflegung* (“the provisioning”) when they are talking about food. Victuals are something “supplied” by the government, and people criticize or praise them in much the same way as soldiers pass daily comments on their field rations.

West Germans, in contrast, have no curbs on their appetites. Their land is rich and their agriculture is efficiently organized to produce about three quarters of the country’s needs. Moreover,

the variety of food is enormous. Germany has no truly national dish; not even the ubiquitous sauerkraut can be counted as such. But there are plenty of regional specialities: herrings, smoked eels and sprats from the North Sea coast, smoked hams from Westphalia, pickled beef from the Rhineland, meat loaves from Bavaria, and (the supreme curse of would-be slimmers) chocolate cake laced with cherry schnapps from the Black Forest. Everywhere there are mighty slabs of roast pork, mountains of bread—200 different kinds, ranging from heavy, dark rye pumpernickel to crisp-crustured white rolls sprinkled with poppy seeds—and countless varieties of sausages. Among the most succulent are *Weisswurst*, the white sausages of Munich, which include a good proportion of brains and are said to taste best when swilled down with a litre mug of beer before noon.

Germany’s vineyards along the Rhine and the Moselle produce outstanding wines, and most areas distill from grain innumerable varieties of fiery schnapps. But no tippie has ever rivalled beer; with an annual consumption of some 11.5 billion litres—that is, almost 150 litres for every man, woman and child—Germans are by far the most prodigious beer-swillers in the world. They can also claim, with some justification, to be the greatest brewers. Since the Middle Ages, exacting standards of quality control have been imposed. In modern times, industrialized brewers have tried to create mass-produced “national” beers; and yet Germany (east and west) still has more than 1,800 small brewers—almost enough to produce an individual beer for every town in the two lands.

The leaning towards fattening food and drink is inescapable. Although

In a massive marquee at the Munich *Oktoberfest*, festival-goers listen to a band playing drinking songs. More than five million people attend this 16-day beer festival every year. Six tents—each seating up to 60,000 revellers—stay open 12 hours a day.

health warnings have led many people to be more diet-conscious, the traditional staples (potatoes in the north and west, noodles in the south-west, and dumplings in Bavaria) remain popular. And bread is consumed in huge quantities—forming the basis of breakfast, when it is eaten with cheese, sliced meats or jam; of a mid-morning sandwich snack; and of a casual evening meal when it may be served with sliced meats, pâté, salads, tinned or pickled fish, cheese, tomatoes, or any other easily prepared savoury. At the same time, in the Federal Republic, tastes are becoming less traditional and more eclectic. Many people now choose to eat out regularly, and most German towns have a variety of foreign restaurants—Chinese, Indian, Greek and Turkish for the most part, and often owned or run by refugees from eastern Europe or enterprising “guest

workers” from the south. There are also American-style steakhouses, and the snack-bars found in streets and in railway stations are as likely to sell kebabs or pizza as the hot sausages that were once their stock-in-trade.

But however much the style and quality of German food may have changed in recent years, the scale on which it is eaten remains immense. Consumption tends to be something in which the people take a certain pride; and usually festival organizers will loudly proclaim the quantities of food and drink consumed as if these were scores in some great national game. A few years ago, for example, the organizers of the Munich *Oktoberfest* cheerfully announced that, within 16 days, participants had demolished 50,000 roast knuckles of pork, 1 million sausages, about 500,000 chickens, 40 spit-roasted oxen and more than 5 million litres of beer. Con-

sumption on this scale, and the popularity of high calorie food and drink, has had an inevitable result on the population. Medical evidence shows that West Germans have a marked tendency to be overweight, with a corresponding vulnerability to heart diseases and all the other ailments arising from excessive consumption of food and drink. Half of all deaths in the Federal Republic are related to heart and circulation ailments.

West Germans became fully alerted to such dangers in the 1970s when alarming medical statistics were published. The news that their new-won prosperity was indirectly harming them was just the sort of gloomy paradox that their social history had taught them to appreciate. They reacted to the medical warnings with characteristic energy. The *Deutscher Sportbund*—the national union of West German sports clubs—launched the *Trimm Dich* (“Get fit”) campaign. Its professed aim was to make healthy exercise fun; and soon half the adult population was being issued with instruction books, together with progress charts to be filled in by fitness-seekers as they ascended a ladder of physical standards. Subsequently, more than 10 million people took part in the campaign, which included competition in running, swimming, cycling and other sports.

Originally, a popular feature of the campaign involved following “fun and fitness trails” marked out in parks and forests. Along these signposted tracks, participants were expected to walk, jog and sprint over recommended distances. At intervals, they found various notices that might exhort a prescribed number of press-ups or pull-ups, and perhaps a battery of gymnastic equipment to exercise otherwise neglected



At one of Hamburg's most exclusive restaurants, a party of guests begin a candle-lit meal in an opulent setting. Twenty-one per cent of West Germans eat in restaurants at least once a week, enjoying the social ritual known as “*Gut essen gehen*”— (“dining out well”).

A BROTHERHOOD OF BREWERS



With a bottle of beer at each place-setting, the monks of Andechs Monastery await their midday meal. Andechs, in Bavaria, is one of a dozen West German cloister breweries with a centuries-old tradition of brewing fine beers. Lunch and dinner are always accompanied by a generous ration of the brothers' own product.

Benedictine monks have been making beer in Germany since the Middle Ages. Originally, the monks brewed only for themselves: they found beer a nutritious drink to take during fasting periods. But gradually, the monasteries started selling their beer, first to the local community and then further afield.

Most of the cloister breweries, like this one at Andechs (*above*), are in Bavaria. Until the 16th century, these monasteries enjoyed a virtual monopoly of beer-making. Then the Duke of Bavaria took control of the industry, and started his own court brewery, the Hofbräuhaus, in Munich, which still survives as a beerhall. To enhance the reputation of Bavarian beer, the duke issued a purity order that the

only permitted ingredients were barley, hops and water. The order, amended to allow for beers made with other grains, such as Berlin's famous *Weissbier*, brewed from wheat, was extended to all Germany and still stands today.

The quality and variety of German beers have helped to make Germans the world's greatest beer drinkers, consuming an annual 150 litres per person. East and West Germany together have more than 1,500 different breweries, producing some 5,000 different brews. Of these establishments, 1,000 are in Bavaria. Most, including the cloister breweries, are small concerns, using water from their own wells to give their beer its distinct local character.

muscles. In the end, the craze died away, and now many fitness trails have disappeared beneath undergrowth. But exercise of some sort—most commonly cycling, jogging, swimming, gymnasia work-outs and long-distance walking—is still extremely popular, and, among men, certainly more popular than dieting as a means towards better health.

In most cases, of course, exercise without a controlled diet is not enough to lose weight. As a result, millions of people each year seek a three or four-week “cure” at one of Germany’s health spas. The treatment may well include dieting, but at least there are plenty of compensations: a break from work, a change of environment, the comforting pleasures of bathing, massage and constant attention. Moreover, most spas have a wide range of leisure facilities, restaurants and parks or woodland; and, in West Germany, the more luxurious ones may offer such diversions as tennis and golf, and gambling at a casino. With good reason, Germans have coined the word *Kur-laub*—combining the words *Kur* (“cure”) and *Urlaub* (“holidays”)—to describe such treatments.

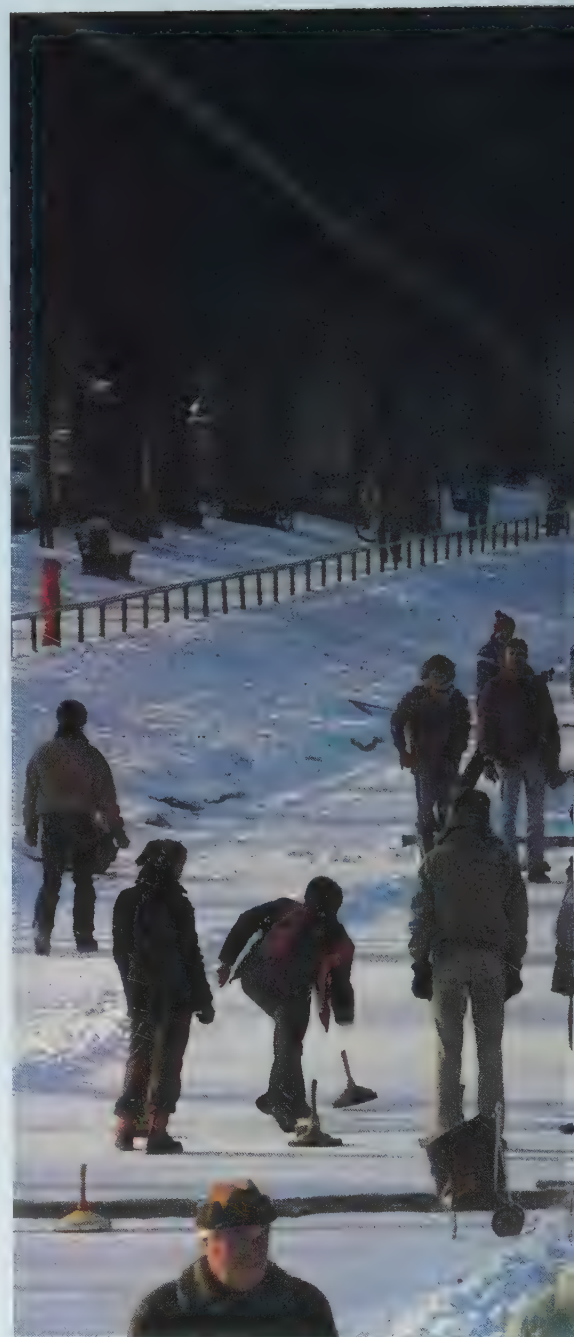
There are more than 250 designated spas in the Federal Republic. They do not all have thermal or mineral springs; some can claim only to have “good air”. But all of them must have treatment facilities approved by the German Spa Association to gain official recognition. Some of these spas date back to medieval times; a few, as in the case of Baden-Baden, have operated for nearly 2,000 years—since the days when Romans harnessed saline thermal springs to their fitness programme. The majority of spas, however, were the products of 19th-century

middle-class wealth and leisure.

Nowadays, all classes are attracted to spas. Not everyone, of course, is fighting obesity. Many patients will be seeking relief from such ailments as rheumatism, arthritis, asthma and high blood pressure. But only a small minority are so ill that they need to stay in a sanatorium; the majority live in hotels or guest houses. Yet such a stay does not normally count as part of one’s annual holiday; rather, it is treatment prescribed by a doctor.

More than six million West Germans attend spas every year, and about 90 per cent have the costs paid under their health insurance policy. In East Germany, there are places at spas for 360,000 people every year. The cost is covered by social insurance contributions (10 per cent of a worker’s income up to 600 marks), and, in awarding places, trade unions usually give preference to shift workers, working mothers, and those, such as coal miners or chemical workers, who work under difficult conditions.

Be it in East or West Germany, a cure in a spa remains a cherished tradition. Although in the cost-conscious 1980s West German insurance companies and employers alike are balking at too many return visits, spas continue to flourish. Many customers come back year after year, attracted as much by the health benefits as by the leisure pursuits. A few return to overindulgence soon after leaving the spa; for some patients, though, the daily therapy at the spa is neutralized by excessive evenings, at the gambling tables or in night clubs. Even when taking the cure, many Germans find it impossible to reconcile their bid for better health with their instinctive drive to enjoy the good life.



In the grounds of Nymphenburg Palace in Munich, local clubs enjoy an *Eis-schiessen* competition. This sport, a variant of curling, is especially popular in southern Germany. Players slide wooden-handled iron discs towards a target; the disc landing nearest to it scores.



GRACIOUS QUEEN OF SPAS

Photographs by Hans Wiesenhofer

For more than a century, the name Baden-Baden has been an international byword for exclusive leisure. Tucked into the warm south-western corner of the country, the resort has survived with conspicuous success the turbulent changes of German history, and still welcomes to the lap of luxury some 200,000 visitors a year.

Until the end of the 18th century, Baden-Baden was a humble village on the fringe of the Black Forest, known for its mineral springs. By the 1830s, entrepreneurial management had transformed the backwater into “the summer residence of Europe”, crowded each season with the diplomats, aristocrats and celebrities of the era.

Now, as then, life centres round the imposing buildings of the spa. The salons of the *Kurhaus* (Cure House), the richly decorated Pump Room, and the well-appointed bathhouses—venerable Friedrichsbad and ultra-modern Augustabad—retain an ambience of comfort and indulgence that is the legacy of a more opulent age.



Baden-Baden lies peacefully among gardens and trees, with the Black Forest mountain foothills rising beyond. When the green-domed, Renaissance-style Friedrichsbad (centre) was completed in 1877, it was Europe's most up-to-date medicinal bath.



Built in the 1820s, the colonnaded Kurhaus provides the setting for much of the glittering life of Baden-Baden—still the scene of balls, banquets and receptions. The Casino, Europe's oldest gambling establishment, occupies the right wing. The garden is set with chairs for a concert.





Two guests stroll into the 100-metre long arcade fronting the Trinkhalle or Pump Room, a majestic building completed in 1842. The painting adorning the wall is one of a series of 14 frescoes by the 19th-century romantic artist Jakob Götzenburger, depicting local legends.



Inside the Pump Room, guests sip large glasses of mineral water drawn from the saline springs. In late summer and autumn, during the grape harvest, they can opt instead for the juice of freshly pressed grapes from the region's vineyards.



As part of the thermal treatment in the Friedrichsbad, guests relax in the warm waters of a circular marble bath beneath the ornate central dome. Through the arch is another, elaborately decorated pool. Heron-patterned tiles (*right*) are typical of the gracefully detailed interior.





In the Augustabad, a client takes a therapeutic warm mud bath made with “fango”, a local volcanic soil that is powdered and mixed with the thermal spring water. The Augustabad was built in the 1960s, but it boasts fittings of traditional elegance such as the brass-tapped sink on the right.

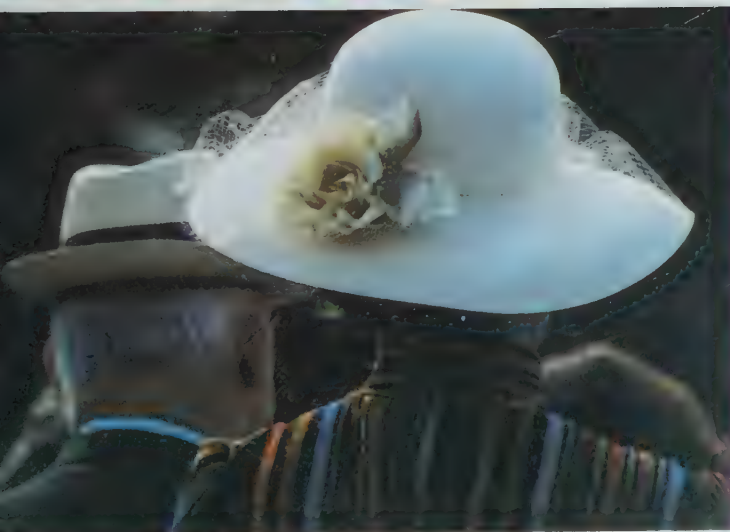




At Iffezheim racecourse, just outside Baden-Baden, visitors follow the runners of a race. Flat racing has been one of the principal attractions of the Baden-Baden season since it was introduced in 1858 by the Frenchman Edouard Benazet, son of the Casino's founder, Jacques Benazet.



Guests in the private enclosure contribute to the high style of the August meeting, climax of the racing season. From kings and queens to opera stars, from sportsmen to industrialists, a glittering international élite has always frequented Iffezheim; in the 19th century, the French novelist Victor Hugo and the Russian writer Turgenev were enthusiastic patrons.





A couple cross the stately forecourt of Brenner's, one of the most august of Baden-Baden's hotels. Established in 1873, Brenner's, with its own clinic, pool and treatment facilities, perfectly distills the atmosphere of unquestioned privilege and leisure on which Baden-Baden prides itself.

The staff of the renowned König's Confiserie and Coffeehouse line up behind a small selection of the shop's 98 kinds of cake and pastry. Since the beginning of the century, König's has served elaborate confections to its discriminating customers.





In the ornate Red Salon of the Casino, the head croupier, flanked by his assistants, prepares the chips for the evening's roulette. With nine rooms and 35 tables, the Casino's annual betting-tax in some years exceeds 30 million marks on its turnover at roulette, baccarat and blackjack.

6





Her face painted with a dove of peace, a West German carries her banner in a demonstration against nuclear weapons. Since the 1960s, young West Germans have been in the vanguard of European radical movements, campaigning on such issues as ecology and women's liberation.

RESHAPING THE SOCIAL ORDER

One month before the dawn of 1984, American television presented a vision of the future grimmer than Orwellian fiction: *The Day After*, a close-up study of the nuclear holocaust as experienced by the flash-blinded citizens of a small Kansas town. Subsequently, in the great international fall-out of criticism, the film was condemned for being too shocking, for not being shocking enough; for being composed of verbal and visual clichés; for being medically or scientifically inaccurate. But in one respect it was unchallenged. All experts agreed that its scenario was plausible; that it was reasonable for the script to have World War III triggered off by events on German soil—in this instance, a mutiny of East German soldiers, the sealing-off of West Berlin by Soviet troops and NATO's use of nuclear missiles in response to a Soviet invasion of West Germany.

The people least surprised by this concept of Armageddon were the Germans themselves. Ever since the "cold war" of the 1950s, they had become increasingly aware of Germany's perilous position as the natural front-line battleground in the event of a military confrontation of the two superpowers. East and west, German peace movements had gathered massive support. In Bonn, demonstrators had appeared on the streets wearing grotesque masks to represent themselves as post-nuclear holocaust mutants. And nearby, outside the government's emergency

bunker in the nearby Eifel Hills, hundreds of demonstrators had simulated events following a siren's warning of an imminent nuclear attack. In the scene enacted, guards pushed back screaming crowds because the bunker was reserved for top NATO brass and government officials. Everyone else had to face death from radiation.

Of course, the Germans are notoriously prone to angst and alarmism. As Theo Sommer, the distinguished West German newspaper editor, has put it: "The Germans are born worriers. They tend to dramatize their social and political conflicts and turn problems that would be considered normal in most other democracies into existential crises. They fret about 'instability' whenever they change administrations (which they do, on an average, once every 15 years). They fear 'ungovernability' every time an upstart party barges into the established threesome of Christian, Social and Free Democrats. They see disaster looming each time their economy does not measure up to the yardstick fashioned by the heady days of the 'German miracle'."

Even so, the Germans—arguably more than people of any other developed nation—have genuine cause for anxiety. The vulnerability of their geopolitical position is self-evident. In the words of author Günter Grass, "As the front-line battleground of each of the military blocks, one thing is certain for both German states: even with the de-

ployment of 'merely' tactical nuclear weapons, the end of the German people would be a strategically foreseen fact which we would have to accept out of loyalty to our respective alliances." And then, always adding to this feeling of insecurity, there is the seemingly impossible problem of Germany's division, a condition denying Germans a true sense of national identity and disturbingly bringing to mind Abraham Lincoln's judgment that "a house divided against itself cannot stand."

German angst was boosted in 1979 by reports of a near catastrophe at Three Mile Island, a nuclear power station south-east of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The Federal Republic, a major producer of nuclear energy, has since been the scene of Europe's largest mass demonstrations against the development of nuclear power stations. Moreover, in recent years, these fears have been increased by an awareness of threats to the environment. One certain danger is the far-reaching blight—

most commonly attributed to acid rain, caused by vehicles and industrial emissions—which is destroying vast areas of forest. The problem of *Waldsterben*, or dying forests, has dealt a profound blow to the German psyche. The country's woodlands—celebrated in music and literature—have had an almost mystical hold on citizens for centuries. A poll by the Allensbach *Institut für Demoskopie*, Germany's best-known public opinion research centre, revealed that West Germans dreaded the death of their forests even more than an escalating arms race.

Besides worrying about the future, Germans—in particular, the West Germans—are condemned to suffer anxiety born of the past: an anxiety sustained by never-ending reminders in films, books, newspapers and magazines of the shame of Hitler's Germany. The most disturbing of all reminders came in 1979 when the American TV serial *Holocaust* had a devastating effect on German society. Previously,

a number of West German films had condemned the Nazi and militarist past. But *Holocaust* brought across the full horror of Hitler's "Final Solution" with an immediacy never before achieved. Television stations had their telephone lines jammed with hundreds of thousands of calls. Some 35 per cent of viewers writing or phoning in expressed fear that the film would harm the country. In the Bundestag, Chancellor Schmidt rightly predicted that the film would compel people to re-examine their moral attitudes. More particularly, the film prompted young Germans to question anew the moral attitudes and values of their elders.

Today, more than 55 per cent of all Germans are too young to have had any association with the infamous Third Reich. Yet this does not give them immunity to the hangover of history. In 1983, in a survey conducted among West Germans aged 18 to 24, some 20 per cent said they were "not very proud" to be Germans, 17 per cent



On the largest anti-nuclear march of the early 1980s, protestors in Bonn carry placards condemning NATO and warning that the next war may destroy

were “not proud at all”, and 21 percent “undecided”. Significantly, too, it is the young West Germans who have exerted the greatest pressure for keeping the concentration camps as memorials to the victims of Nazi persecution.

Herein lies one of the most striking aspects of Germany’s development in the post-war years. In the free society of the Federal Republic, the reaction of younger Germans to so many anxieties has taken positive forms—repudiation of the old militaristic spirit that had grown so vigorously after Prussian-forged unification; rejection of old-style authoritarianism; demands for more democratic and western-style institutions; mass demonstrations on behalf of nuclear disarmament and over a variety of environmental issues. In the process, West German society—its traditional values and behaviour patterns—has changed dramatically.

Sociologists have argued that the emergence of post-war West Germans,

more independent and progressive than previous generations, must be explained partly in terms of less disciplined family life. In turn, therefore, it may be argued that the seeds of this change were sown as long ago as 1919 when the Weimar Constitution proclaimed equal rights for women. Subsequently, during the lifetime of the Weimar Republic, millions of women, many of them married, went out to work, so eroding the old concept of a male-dominated society with the German *Hausfrau* being condemned to the realms of *Kinder, Küche und Kirche* (“children, kitchen and church”).

This trend was briefly reversed by the great Depression, then by the coming to power of the Nazis who provided financial incentives for women to become housewives and mothers. But later, as Germany prepared again for war, more than 14 million women were needed in full-time employment, and millions of children became known as *Schlüsselkinder* (“door-key children”) be-

cause they returned to an empty house when school finished in the afternoon.

After the war, the number of women employees increased further. First, there were countless war widows who had to find a job; and later, in West Germany, a booming economy encouraged wives to join the work force in pursuit of the material benefits of a rich consumer society. Between 1950 and 1969 the number of women employees in West Germany more than doubled, from 4.2 to 9.6 million. By 1978, well over one third of the total work force (10.2 out of 26.9 million) were women, and 3.5 million had children under the age of 18. So there emerged a new generation of Germans who experienced less parental control than before, and who, incidentally, were exposed more and more to outside influences via the new medium of television.

Furthermore, as the Federal Republic became more closely integrated with Western democracies, discipline in the schools became less rigid. Before the



the world as we know it. Disturbed by the proliferation of U.S. and Soviet missiles in Europe, some 450,000 West Germans joined this demonstration.

division of Germany, east and west, the atmosphere in most classrooms had not greatly changed from that experienced in the 1870s by the eminent dramatist, Gerhardt Hauptmann, who later recalled "When the teacher entered the classroom the boys immediately stood to attention until the order 'Sit down' was given in a military voice. The way of teaching was exactly like that of an instructor in the Army. Simple words, a mild manner, a kind support of the pupil were considered sentimental. They were regarded as weak and effeminate. Behind the teacher was not Lessing, Herder, Goethe or Socrates, but the Prussian petty officer." By the late 1960s, however, British and French children going to West Germany under school exchange schemes were often surprised to find the atmosphere in classrooms relaxed and informal. In high schools, it was not unusual to encounter young teachers wearing blue jeans, and—much to the horror of older Germans—on first name terms with their pupils. Some universities were still bastions of privilege and out-dated formalities. But otherwise the education system received sweeping reforms.

Meanwhile, the advent of the *Pille* had heralded the dawn of a new permissive age. In the 1960s, Oswalt Kolle's explicit sex-instruction books and films became all the rage; and best-sellers like his *Deine Frau, das unbekannte Wesen* ("Your Wife, the Unknown Being") raised questions about the conduct of marital relations that many couples had never faced before. Inevitably, women's greater economic and sexual freedom had a profound impact on family life in West Germany, as indeed it had on the Western world in general. It led to the erosion of authoritarian conventions in the home and the

emergence of a post-war generation prepared to challenge traditional values and authoritarianism in the world.

From the mid-1960s onwards, a large section of West German students were in reformist mood; eager—after the democratization of the socio-political system—to complete what the eminent Bonn historian Karl Dietrich Bracher called "emancipation from yesterday". They pressed for modernization of their social, educational and legal institutions. More ambitiously, they challenged the authority of the university professoriate, or rather the authority of the senior, long-serving full professors, a prestigious group of mandarins whose exalted, tenured, highly paid and autocratic positions represented a supreme example of conservatism and élitism.

At first, the German student revolt impressed many foreign observers as an object lesson in grass-roots democracy. Tragically, however, the revolt became progressively more militant after a student, Benno Ohnesorg, was shot and killed by riot police on June 2, 1967, during a rowdy demonstration in West Berlin against the visiting Shah of Iran. Thereafter, extremists began to take over the student movement, and the violence escalated. Students forcefully invaded faculty meetings to present their demands for reforms "to sweep away the mould of a thousand years". University buildings were daubed with political slogans. Professors were terrorized in their homes.

The German people had always held university professors in the highest esteem, ranking them above all other career groups, including bishops, generals and ministers of states. Disrespectful action on the part of student extremists now horrified older Ger-

mans, many of whom saw it as final proof that society had gone too far in its abandonment of traditional values and disciplines. Public opinion hardened against the students; there were to be another six years of conflict before the university administration was radically reformed and students were given a share in the decision-making process.

More alarmingly, the killing of Ohnesorg had aroused young radicals whose motivation was ideological. A new-born "June 2 Movement" announced its intention of avenging Ohnesorg's death. And among those who broke with conventional, non-violent protest was Gudrun Ensslin, a leader of the Socialist Students' Union, who turned to terrorism as the "logical" next step in her struggle against the government. She and a group of like-minded revolutionaries resolved to fight "police-murderers" with acts of violence: in their eyes, the government belonged to "the generation of Auschwitz—you cannot argue with them".

Eventually, this terrorist group became known as the "Baader-Meinhof gang", so named after its protagonists: Andreas Baader, son of a university professor, and Ulrike Meinhof, a highly intelligent journalist and a mother of two children. In 1972, following a notorious career as bombers and bank robbers, Ensslin, Baader and Meinhof were arrested and later sentenced to life imprisonment after facing charges of complicity in five murders and 71 cases of attempted murder. But this was far from the end of terrorism; instead the "Baader-Meinhof gang" spawned another, more lethal and professional, gang of terrorists, the Red Army Faction, which openly called for a socialist revolution. In April 1977, after Meinhof had committed suicide, these ter-

rorists took vengeance by murdering the Chief Federal Prosecutor, Siegfried Buback. Two months later, the gang murdered Jürgen Ponto, the chairman of the board of the Dresdner Bank, in a bungled kidnapping attempt.

Then, in the autumn, there unfolded the most spectacular drama in the tragic history of post-war German terrorism. The remnants of the Red Army Faction kidnapped the president of the German employers' association, Hans-Martin Schleyer, killing his driver and three bodyguards in the process. They offered to exchange Schleyer for the surviving Baader-Meinhof gang leaders. Chancellor Schmidt refused to capitulate to their demands. Subsequently, members of the gang hijacked a Lufthansa plane on a flight from Majorca to Hamburg and forced it to fly to Rome, Cyprus, Dubai and Aden before coming to a halt in Moga-

dishu, Somalia. En route, one of the pilots was killed in cold blood and many of the 82 passengers were brutally maltreated by grenade-toting terrorists.

In Mogadishu, the kidnappers threatened to kill everyone aboard if their demands were not met. But before they could act, the plane was seized by a crack West German counter-terrorist unit which rushed it in the middle of the night, killed three of the hijackers, wounded the fourth, and saved all the hostages. Shortly afterwards it was discovered that Ensslin and two other Baader-Meinhof terrorists had committed suicide in prison. The kidnappers retaliated by murdering Schleyer and leaving him in the boot of a car found abandoned in Alsace, not far from the West German border. "The battle has just begun," they declared.

The Mogadishu incident marked a turning-point in German radical poli-

tics. The terrorists' mindless cruelty had sickened and alienated all but the most fanatical of their supporters who, originally, were thought to have numbered about 100,000 people, mainly students. It was not the end of terrorism. In the early 1980s, the Red Army Faction claimed responsibility for terrorist acts against U.S. army personnel and property, and for an attempt to assassinate General Frederick Kroesen, commander of the U.S. Army in Europe. However, after the Mogadishu drama, youth movements became noticeably less concerned with ideologies and more with environmental issues and alternative lifestyles.

How deeply West German youth had become concerned with environmental threats was reflected in 1981 by a poll of 15 to 20-year-olds which found that 30 per cent of the age group fully expected technology and chemistry to



Avant-garde artist Joseph Beuys (above), a supporter of West Germany's ecology party, the Greens, stands among 7,000 basalt blocks that form part of a sculpture for the town of Kassel. The stones (left) are to be embedded in the earth, next to trees, to symbolize the power of nature.

A teacher monitors students' progress in the language laboratory at Leipzig's 700-year old Thomaner music school. J. S. Bach wrote much of his choral music for the Thomaner, one of some 100 schools in the GDR providing a general education and training for musically gifted children.



destroy the globe, while another 46 per cent thought that such destruction was probable. At this time, more and more, young Germans were questioning old values and attitudes. For example, when government officials argued that the expansion of nuclear research and development was essential for West Germany's highly industrialized economy, young radicals countered that such a purely financial argument—putting materialism before quality of life—was typical of the generation that had forged the *Wirtschaftswunder*.

For a while it seemed Germany was fated to stage a replay of the oldest Teutonic saga of confrontation between generations: the ninth-century tale of the veteran Hildebrand who returns home weary from war, only to be challenged to combat by his impetuous, uncompromising son Hadubrand. In the early 1980s, a recurrent image on West German television screens was the street battle: on the one side the fear-

some, plastic-visored, shield-bearing riot police, drawn up in a straight line like the knights in Eisenstein's film classic *Alexander Nevsky*; on the other, a motley crew of young protestors demonstrating for squatters' rights, for the preservation of some woodland threatened by an *Autobahn* development, for the cancellation of plans to build an atomic reactor, or another towering office block in an area that had a serious shortage of housing.

At the same time, ever-increasing numbers of West Germans (eventually more than 60,000 a year) were applying to be registered as conscientious objectors, and so take the alternative-service option to work in hospitals, old-age homes and institutions for the handicapped instead of 15 months of military service. "Our young people are not nationalistic," said the chief of the Alternative Service Department in 1983. "They hardly know what the words, 'German' and 'Fatherland' mean."

To a degree, West Germany was paying the price of the "baby boom" of the prosperous, optimistic 1960s—productive years that now released an unusually large number of school-leavers on to the job market at a time when unemployment was rising. In part, this explained the enormous increase in the number of young Germans practising different lifestyles, the so-called *Alternativen*. By the early 1980s, there were hundreds of communes whose members were attempting to define, as one put it, "a culture alongside the traditional confining German society". The mecca of this vast counter-culture movement was West Berlin, where at least 50,000 residents had dropped out of the main stream of society. They included radical activists, squatters, members of health-food communes, sexual liberationists and religious visionaries. "Anybody who wants to be different and to feel all right being different, who doesn't want the things he or she was taught to want, flees to West Berlin," explained a writer for the alternative newspaper, *die tageszeitung*. Citizens of this free-thinking society established not only their own newspapers and magazines, but also their own food shops, restaurants, theatres, garden colonies, social centres. For some, drugs were an essential part of life; others were clean-living addicts who shunned all forms of drugs, including tobacco and alcohol. But the majority had one sentiment in common: contempt for the materialistic values of the consumer society.

On the political scene, the upsurge in "alternative" thinking had led to the founding in 1979 of *Die Grünen* ("the Greens"), a party with environmentalist beginnings which scored its first notable success during the elections of

1983 when it won 27 of the 498 seats in the *Bundestag*. *Die Grünen* held aloof from normal politics. "We are against the rigid, cold sense of German order," announced their spokeswoman Petra Kelly. "We are the anti-party, the party for those who are disillusioned, no, disgusted with the way the government has been running this country with a minimum of accountability to the people for its decisions." After its success, the "anti-party" continued to proclaim belief in obstructionist and "extra-parliamentary" tactics. Its programme combined environmental issues on which nearly everybody could safely agree—save-the-whale, spare-that-tree—with radical anti-nuclear and anti-NATO policies. Members described themselves as "icebreakers" against a society they characterized as "Greenland". But some critics accused them of cultivating a dangerous, often xenophobic romanticism, of advocating pacifism that would erode German support for NATO and disturb the balance of power that had so long been the basis of peace in Europe.

As for the anti-authoritarian aspect of the Greens' platform—a main attraction to young voters—conservatives said they had drawn the wrong lessons from the Nazi past. "They look at their parents' mistake in accepting Hitler's authority and conclude that they should not accept any authority," wrote the mayor of Stuttgart, Manfred Rommel (son of the World War II Field Marshal who commanded Germany's North African campaign). "What they do not recognize is that a strong democracy is the only protection against a dictatorship like Hitler's."

Despite the impact of the youth revolution, the style of West German society

has by no means changed beyond all recognition. For example, a distinctive sense of order and efficiency remains characteristic of the German way of life. In the Federal Republic, this shows in the cleanliness of the cities (miraculously unsoiled streets belie the existence of about 2.5 million dogs), in the smooth-running of hotels and restaurants, the punctuality of public transport, the effectiveness of a highly modernized police force, the pride which the majority of citizens take in their neat personal appearance and in their functional homes. Not least, a penchant for *Ordnung* ("order") is evinced by myriad regulations governing almost every conceivable aspect of public or semi-public life.

The environmentalists may join in acts of civil disobedience when campaigning over fundamental issues;

from time to time, students and various action groups may challenge the authority of established institutions. The fact remains that the overwhelming majority of Germans still choose to uphold laws that contribute to a well-ordered life. Indeed, it is not unusual to find that an ordinary passer-by will take it upon himself to tell a motorist that he is illegally parked; equally, a pedestrian is likely to admonish another for crossing a main street against a red light. The Germans still like to have rules covering every contingency so that nothing need be left open to dispute or misunderstandings.

A high-rise apartment may display signs forbidding or limiting an extraordinary range of activities: cycling, walking dogs, hanging out washing, playing music, mowing lawns, participating in ball games, using transistors.



At a primary school in Cologne, two West German boys practise handwriting. At the age of 10, they will choose one of three forms of secondary schooling: *Gymnasium* for a pre-university course, *Realschule* for a general education, or *Hauptschule* to prepare for apprenticeships.

In some areas, local by-laws forbid you to take baths between certain hours, to have windows unshielded by lace curtains, to hold more than one party a month. Similarly, a plethora of regulations dictate what citizens should do. Every householder, for example, has a legal obligation to keep the pavement outside his home free of impediments, including fallen leaves in autumn, and snow and ice in winter. All citizens are required to carry identity cards, and dogs must wear an official tag showing that their annual tax has been paid. And all residents, including long-term foreign visitors, must lodge their name and address with the local *Einwohnermeldeamt* (registration office).

In some ways, the Germans' reputation for thoroughness is more deserved than ever because they have fully exploited technological advances in their relentless pursuit of efficiency. In the 1970s, for example, millions of Deutsche Marks were expended on improving West German police forces, both at *Land* and federal level, with sophisticated criminal investigation equipment, including highly advanced computers. When checking someone at the West German border, a frontier guard may now put the person's passport upside-down on a glass plate and have it electronically "read" in a few seconds by a system linked to the central police computer at Wiesbaden.

To a lesser degree, old German ways also linger on in the observation of traditional formalities and customs. Many older men—much to the amusement of the young—still automatically kiss a lady's hand on being introduced. Still more commonly, a great many older Germans reserve the intimate *du* ("thou") for addressing close friends, relations, children and pets, and em-

ploy the formal *Sie* ("you") to keep others at a respectful distance. And usage of professional titles is common practice—for example, *Herr Professor*, *Herr Doktor* and, more curiously, *Herr Obermetzgermeister* ("Mr Senior Master-Butcher") and *Herr Dachdeckermeister* ("Mr Roof-Maker").

Year by year, however, these traditions are less in evidence. To a large extent, this is the result of a breakdown of the old class and status barriers. The Industrial Revolution of the late 19th century transformed Germany into a deeply class-divided society, in which everyone was keenly aware of their socio-economic position and able to categorize others according to accent, appearance, place of residence or title. But World War II was a great leveller. The combination of a new welfare state and widely shared post-war prosperity created a predominantly middle-class society; and with a lowering of social barriers, people were more relaxed and communicative. Perhaps the most striking and welcome evidence of this change is the smile on the face of the modern bureaucrat in the town hall or tax collector's office. While the trammels of German red tape are still a wonder to behold, at least the innumerable paragraphs of the law are now administered by human beings who tend to see themselves as public servants rather than as Prussian-style masters of petty paper domains.

Another key factor in the shaping of this far less formal society has been the Federal Republic's increasing integration with other Western democracies. Some writers have argued that West Germany—with its cocktail bars, Hilton hotels, Coca-Cola, Wild West clubs and mushrooming McDonald emporiums—has been "Americanized". But

that is perhaps too narrow a view; by the same token, one might argue that the U.S. has been "Germanized" by the great inflow of Volkswagen cars, Löwenbräu beer, Rosenthal china, Braun electric shavers, Adidas sports gear, Herbert von Karajan-Berlin Philharmonic recordings and, most pervasive of foods, the "hamburger", so named because it was introduced to the U.S. by mid-19th century German emigrants who sailed on ships of the Hamburg-Amerika line.

But certainly the Federal Republic has been influenced by others—a process that began through occupation by American, British and French forces after the war, and continued with the creation of a Republic modelled on Western democracies and subsequently bound, economically and militarily, to the West. Most significantly—as a result of increasing travel, television and mandatory teaching of the English language—West Germans have been profoundly influenced by Anglo-Saxon culture and a new-style German society has evolved. Meanwhile, the GDR has evolved on fundamentally different lines, and so there is an ever-widening gulf between the two Germanys which Willy Brandt so euphemistically called "two states within one nation".

On October 16, 1906, one Wilhelm Voigt, cobbler and ex-convict, staggered through the streets of Köpenick, near Berlin, while wearing an army captain's uniform that he had bought in a pawn-shop. Along the way, he commandeered 11 guardsmen and ordered them to follow him to the town hall. There, unchallenged, he proceeded to "confiscate" municipal funds totalling four thousand marks and to



An East German shows off his 1934 American motorbike to two leather-clad friends. In the GDR, bikers co-exist with hippies, punks and other youthful tribes in a counter-culture that is fond of exotic Western clothing and memorabilia, often bought on the black market.

have the mayor, his treasurer and his secretary arrested and marched to the nearby guardhouse. Only once was the bogus captain asked for his credentials. He simply pointed to his 11 soldiers and said: "Here are my credentials."

The celebrated case of the "Captain of Köpenick"—solved only when an acquaintance of Voigt turned police informer—was derisively greeted abroad as a classic example of the Germans' obedience of anyone seemingly in a position of authority, especially uniformed authority. It later became the subject of a world-famous play by Carl Zuckmayer, and it strongly reinforced the popular belief that such servitude was a dominant German trait. Of course, this notion is hardly convincing in the free society of present-day West Germany, where hundreds of thousands of citizens belong to protest groups of one kind or another. On the other hand, the old German saying, *Ruhe ist des Bürgers erste Pflicht* ("Quiet obedience is a citizen's first duty"), still has considerable application in the GDR. Indeed, many observers have argued that the GDR—a regimented society strong in authoritarianism, militarism and bureaucracy—is far more redolent of the old Germany than the Federal Republic. Here a certain continuity of lifestyle has been maintained by limiting opportunities for change.

Today, more than half of East Germany's 17 million citizens have never had experience of life outside the Communist system. They were born into a restricted world where upbringing takes place in an environment controlled by the state; and where, almost from infancy, the virtues of socialism are inculcated. In essence, the East German State may be seen as a surrogate parent, involving itself in the care

and shaping of its children virtually from the cradle. It provides enough crèches to accommodate, on a daily or Monday to Friday basis, more than 60 per cent of all children between 5 months and 3 years. Its kindergarten system can cater for all children between the ages of 3 and 6 years. Except for a modest charge for meals, these facilities are state financed, and include services such as medical attention.

Thus, two vital ends are achieved: East German mothers are released for work and the state begins influencing the young. From the kindergarten stage, gentle stress is placed on moral attitudes, social obligations, sport and collective activities; and in the words of an official GDR booklet, children "learn to understand concepts such as *homeland, war, peace and solidarity* and to act in solidarity with all people fighting against oppression and war".

These ideals are further promoted in the Pioneers, a children's organization, whose junior branch (the Young Pioneers) any child may join at the age of six. Five years later, children become eligible for its senior branch, the Ernst Thälmann Pioneers, so named in honour of the labourer-trade unionist who became leader of the German Communist Party in 1925 and who was shot by the Nazis at Buchenwald concentration camp in 1944. Membership of the Pioneer movement, founded in 1948, is strictly voluntary. But since Pioneer groups are formed in every school, usually with the class teacher as group leader, it is not surprising that some 1.6 million children—about 90 per cent of the 6 to 14-age group—belong.

It is also at the age of six that formal schooling begins with entry into a co-educational Ten-Year Polytechnic School, providing an integrated, free



and compulsory system of education. As in the Federal Republic, school starts at about 8 a.m. and ends around 1 p.m. But then comes a very significant difference in the daily routine. While most West German children will return home for lunch and tackle their homework (probably unsupervised if both parents are working), East German pupils—rarely left to their own devices—stay on for lunch followed by supervised Pioneer activities. Members may belong to various career-study groups, as well as orchestral, choral, theatrical and sports groups; and during school holidays they may attend Pioneer camps and join in organized visits to factories, military units, cultural and sporting events.

In the early years at a GDR school, the timetable is dominated by German and mathematics, with sport, music, drawing and gardening as subsidiary subjects. At the age of 12, children have history, geography, biology and physics added to their curriculum, plus six hours of Russian every week. Their history textbooks differ significantly from West German ones. In the GDR, German history is strongly in favour of groups and individuals judged to have aided progress towards the creation of a "Workers' and Peasants' State". From the 19th century onwards there is overwhelming emphasis on Karl Marx and his followers, from the martyred Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht to the leading figures of the present-day Socialist Unity Party.

East German and West German history books are equally condemnatory of Hitler's Third Reich. But here, again, there is a significant difference: GDR citizens grow up with a much more comfortable perspective of the Nazi era. They learn that the Nazis

were essentially products of "monopoly capitalism" and, unlike West German children, they are given positive heroes of the 1930s and 1940s to admire: Thälmann and the many other German Communists who died in Nazi concentration camps, plus a few "enlightened" non-Communists such as Count Claus Schenk von Stauffenberg, whose bomb nearly killed Hitler in July 1944. Thus, East Germans are freed of any sense of guilt. While the Federal Republic has paid out billions of marks on restitution for the wrongs done to Jews, the GDR has paid none on the grounds that it is not the successor to the Third Reich and has no moral or legal obligation for the evils of the Nazis.

As though it were conscious of the danger of teenage rebellion, the state makes a renewed effort to influence people from the age of 14. At that age, virtually all East Germans attend preparatory classes for the *Jugendweihe* ("youth consecration"), an initiation ceremony, designed to replace religious confirmation, at which young people affirm publicly that they have "grown up in the Socialist faith". At 14, also, East Germans are eligible for the senior wing of the *Freie Deutsche Jugend* (FDJ), the Free German youth movement, founded in 1946 with Erich Honecker (promoted Head of State in 1971) as its first chairman.

The FDJ, with a membership of some 2.3 million (about 77 per cent of all East Germans in the 14 to 25-age category), wields considerable power and influence. It is represented in schools and factories, villages and urban residential areas, and has 40 representatives in the 500-deputy People's Chamber, the GDR's parliament. Its distinctive uniform—blue cap, shirt and trousers, and loosely tied red

scarf—is prominent at political rallies. It is also to be seen among the youth brigades employed during college vacations on collective construction projects such as building dams or extending railways—a form of cheap labour that has made a significant contribution to the national economy.

On a less solemn note, FDJ members operate thousands of youth clubs, organize popular "Rock-for-Peace" pop concerts, and compete in *Spartakiaden*, multi-sport Games held biennially at local, district and national level. In addition, officials of the movement help to administer *Wehreziehung* ("Defence education"). Since 1978, this subject—mainly involving marksmanship, field training and first aid—has been compulsory for all boys of 15 and 16, preparing them for the 18 months of military service which is mandatory for all male citizens between 18 and 26.

Thus, the FDJ effectively channels youthful energies into activities favoured by the state. Inevitably, there comes a time when young East Germans are liable to rebel against so much regimentation and seek to express themselves in more individual style. Indeed, some continue to adopt the outward fashions of the West's alternative lifestyle; the GDR has long-haired hippies, skinheads, leather-clad motor-bikers, even peacock-plumed punks. But in this rigidly ordered socialist state, it is impracticable to drop out of society. After all, there is officially no unemployment, and so there is no such thing as the dole. Here, a youth would need exceedingly generous parents or friends to survive without a job.

The difficulties that may be encountered by the non-conformist are illustrated by the case of Rudolf Schwartz, an assembly-line solderer in a Karl

In East Berlin's Pioneer Palace, with its free sport and leisure facilities, a girl spins on a wheel that simulates the weightlessness of space flight. Young East Germans' interest was boosted by GDR citizen Sigmund Jahn's flight on a Soviet space mission in 1978.

Marx-Stadt electrical factory. As a brilliant school sprinter, Rudolf automatically went to the State Institute for Physical Education, a university-level technical college in Leipzig. The college's main function is to produce professional athletics instructors who, it is hoped, will maintain the GDR's phenomenal record in international sport. But Rudolf did not want to join the mainstream of the state's sport programme. His ambition was to teach handicapped children remedial exercises.

He recalls: "All the emphasis was on producing winners. Everybody was taught that we had to win—win for the cause, win for the Republic." Eventually he and several other students criticized the institute's official policy, largely on the grounds that "sports should be designed for people, not people for sports". There were arguments in class; later, confrontation with institute officials. The result: Rudolf, then 22, was summarily dismissed and blacklisted for life from physical education. Now he has a factory job that enables him to meet his basic needs but keeps him discontented. He hopes to find work in a small crafts industry that has not been nationalized—handcrafting leather bags or cutting designs on tombstones is potentially more lucrative than his present job. If he succeeds, he will have realized his other ambition—to maintain a low profile, or as he puts it, "to stay out of sight and not be answerable to any authority".

Günther Gaus, who retired in 1981 as chief of the West German mission in East Berlin, explained that in the GDR—which he found "more German than the Federal Republic"—they have coined the word, *Nischengesellschaft*, roughly meaning a society in

which individuals carve for themselves niches where they can live beyond the far-reaching shadow of the state. In reality, though, only a very small minority achieve such freedom from authority. Here lives on the ubiquitous Prussian *Beamte*, the same stern-faced unbending bureaucrat who constituted the backbone of Imperial, Weimar and Nazi Germany. Now he runs not only the town hall, the post offices, the railways and the prisons, but the shops and factories as well. Here, too, authority is massively represented by the military: a National People's Army of at least 115,000 troops and 50,000 border guards. With the addition of an estimated Soviet force of 380,000 or more troops, East Germany is one of the most militarized countries in the world.

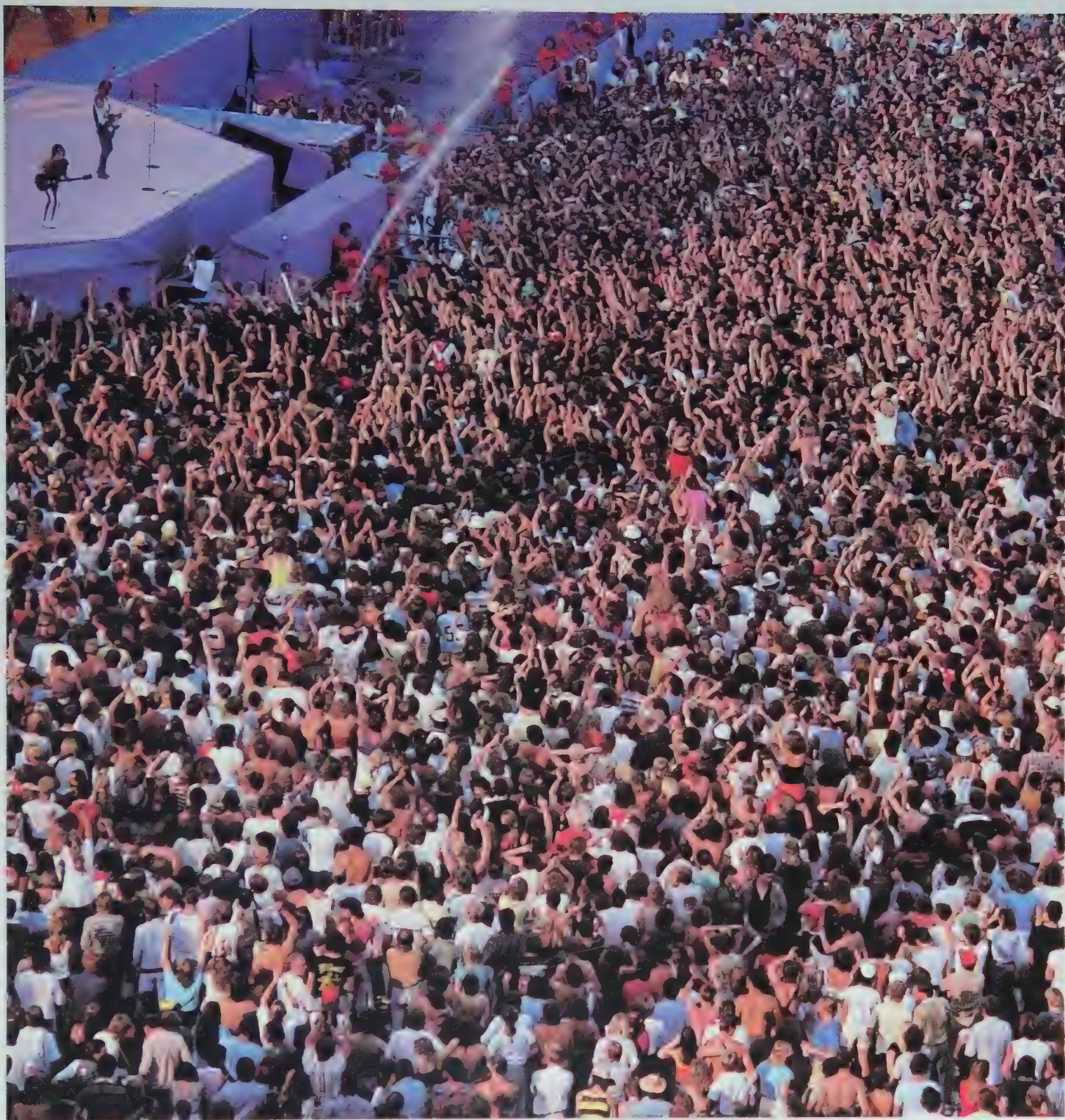
In this authoritarian state, the government's image of the perfect citizen is summed up in the old slogan that is still painted on motorway bridges, *Aufmerksam, Rücksichtsvoll, Diszipliniert—Ich Bin Dabei!* ("Attentive, Considerate, Disciplined—I Am With It!"). Actually, in spite of the relentless government propaganda, most East Germans are not wholeheartedly "with it". They may be true socialists in spirit (long before the creation of the GDR, East Germany was the traditional stronghold of German socialism), but they resent the earnest, humourless functionaries of the *Apparat* who run the country and constitute the privileged élite.

The majority make obeisance to the Soviet-designed system because they realistically recognize that they have no alternative. As a Dresden factory worker reasoned: "Why waste time worrying about how to change something that cannot be changed? We had our little rebellion in 1953 and no one supported us. Since then our living

standards have steadily improved. Not as much as in West Germany, of course. But at least no one is starving or homeless. So why risk rocking the boat? We prefer to keep quiet and have a reasonably comfortable life without all the protests and political fighting that so often disrupts life in the West."

Recognizing the omnipotence of the state, GDR citizens tend to concern themselves with problems of everyday life and—unlike their West German brothers—not suffer too much angst over large issues beyond their control or sphere of influence. The exception, of course, is anxiety over the proliferation of nuclear weapons in Europe. Because of the catastrophe of 1945, East Germans, as well as West Germans, have a deeply ingrained horror of war; and that horror is made all the greater by the realization that war in Europe would almost certainly commit the German people to fratricide.

It is the unique tragedy of the Germans that they seem destined to belong inescapably to twin buffer-states. Reunification may remain a task set by the Federal Republic's Basic Law. West German Chancellors may consistently proclaim that there is only one German nation. Nevertheless, the fact remains that foreign political leaders on either side of the great divide regard the existence of two Germanys as essential for the maintenance of the balance of power between East and West. The alternative—too alarming for neighbouring countries to contemplate—is the re-emergence of a single nation-state of 78 million Germans, an industrial, commercial and military colossus that would dominate central Europe. Thus, as throughout the greater part of German history, national unity remains a seemingly impossible dream.



Responding to the pulsing rhythms of the Rolling Stones, some 100,000 young Germans enjoy themselves at an open-air rock concert in Munich's Olympic Stadium in 1982. In front of the stage, a fire-hose plays over the heads of the crowd, providing welcome relief from the summer heat.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The index for this book was prepared by Vicki Robinson. For their help with this volume, the editors also wish to thank the following: Bäder-und Kurverwaltung, Baden-Baden, Federal Republic of Germany; Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, West Berlin; Mike Brown, London; Deutscher Bäderverband E.V., Bonn; Embassy of the German Democratic Republic, London; German Historical Institute, London; Goethe Institute, London; Liz Hodgson, London; Jay Hornsby, London; Margit Hosseini, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, London; Eluned James, London; L.E. Kramer, London; Landesfremdenverkehrsverband Bayern e.V., Munich; Jeremy Lawrence, London; G. Schäfer, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, London; R. Tegtmeyer, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, London; Deborah Thompson, London.

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Colour separations by Fotolitomec, S.N.C.,
Milan, Italy.
Typesetting by Tradespools Ltd., Somerset,
England.
Printed and bound by Artes Gráficas Toledo,
S.A., Spain.
D.L.TO:1306-1989



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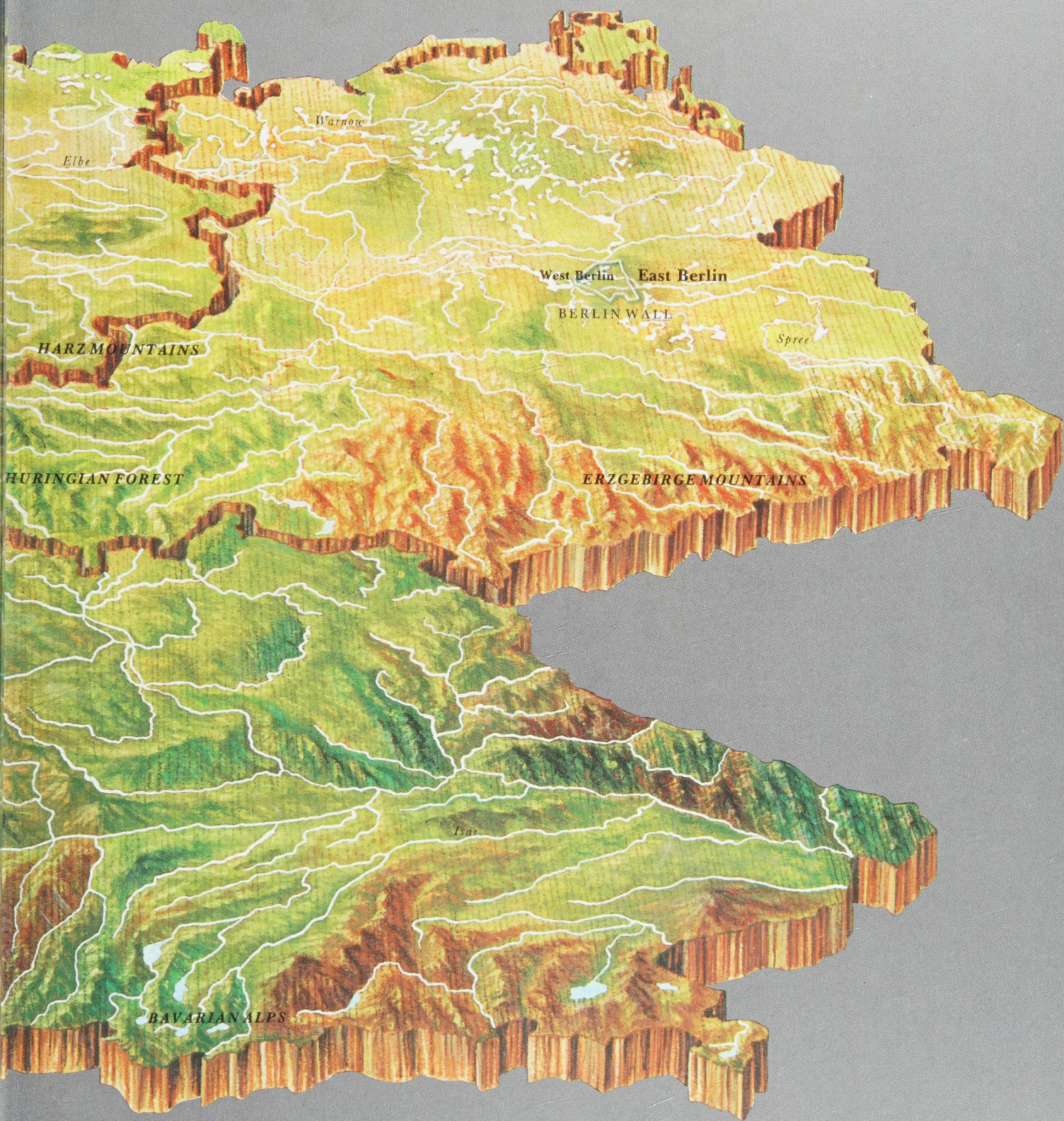
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